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The Volcano Prisoners

Or, THE SEA COAST QUEEN :-: By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER I.

TROUBLE ABOARD SHIP.

IT WAS a series of strange and remarkable events that befell the ship Happy Ann and her crew. The perils of the great deep, the war with uncivilized man, the lot of the castaway, and the startling adventures in the heart of Hatharo, the Fiery One—all these things came to us when we sailed the Pacific in our staunch vessel in the year of our Lord, 1839.

'Twas the second dog-watch and we were grouped around the windlass, a calm over the ocean, the sails hanging close to the masts, the ship rocking idly on the almost motionless water. An ordinary seaman began grumbling at the de'ay, but old Seth Styles, the ablest of the foremast hands, cut him short.

"Don't ye worry, youngster! If it's a breeze ye hanker for, you will have your fill afore the mornin' watch goes below. Somethin' is afoot!"

"There isn't a whisper of wind," growled the croaker.

"Wind! List to the boy! Hark ye, this won't last. There is a blow comin' that will stir your stumps an' keep them under all sail. Wind! Why, love ye, it's bound to blow so you won't know the bread-barge an' beef-kid, so seldom will ye see them, an' even the scuttlebutt won't be on speakin' terms with ye."

"Where do you see the tokens, Seth?" asked Peter Clarick.

"Fix your eyes on the west sky with a tight gasket-hitch. D'ye like the looks thataway? What for a color is it? Rosy red o' sunset? Hey? Or is it something more?"

"I've been lookin' at that sky with suspicion," said Ben Gustin. "It looks angry."

"So she do, Ben, sure as you live. Angry! Them is the words, shipmates. Eye her, lads, eye her well."

We all looked. The heavens had been clear through the entire day, the sky delightfully blue and soft, but now a dullness, rather than a mist or clouds, had packed up aloft, thin but noticeable. That was nothing, but the sunset horizon was worth survey. Color was there. All along the line where earth and ocean met were long, narrow, horizontal bands, each different from its fellows, though all bordering on a common hue. Dark red was there, and strange casts of maroon, yellow, indigo, brown, and many more, but not one shade natural. Something seemed to be wrong with each, and even the ordinary seamen detected it now.

"There is wind back o' them bands," remarked Peter. "It's a mighty brassy sky."

"Reckon she will raise a cat's-paw," added Seth, with sarcasm.

"An' we ain't got a fit man on the quarter-deck," said Peter.

"There ye get the worst on't. Mr. Knapp is a right decent young chap, but, he come in by the cabin-winder, an' what he don't know about handlin' a ship would fill a dictionary," agreed another hand.

"What can ye expect of a feller who is master afore he is man?"

"Avast there, Dave Girdle! Mr. Knapp is all right, and he don't lack experience. He is bound to get more now, for Cap'n Steele an' Mr. Winn are gone. They was old stagers. But, look ye, mates, I makes my guess Mr. Knapp will handle her all right if we get a blow."

Seth defended with zeal, and both from a liking for the man attacked and from a sense of duty. He was no fok'sle croaker or backbite, but as loyal a man as ever cast off a gasket or pulled a halyard. His sturdy speech silenced clamor, though one of our number slowly said:

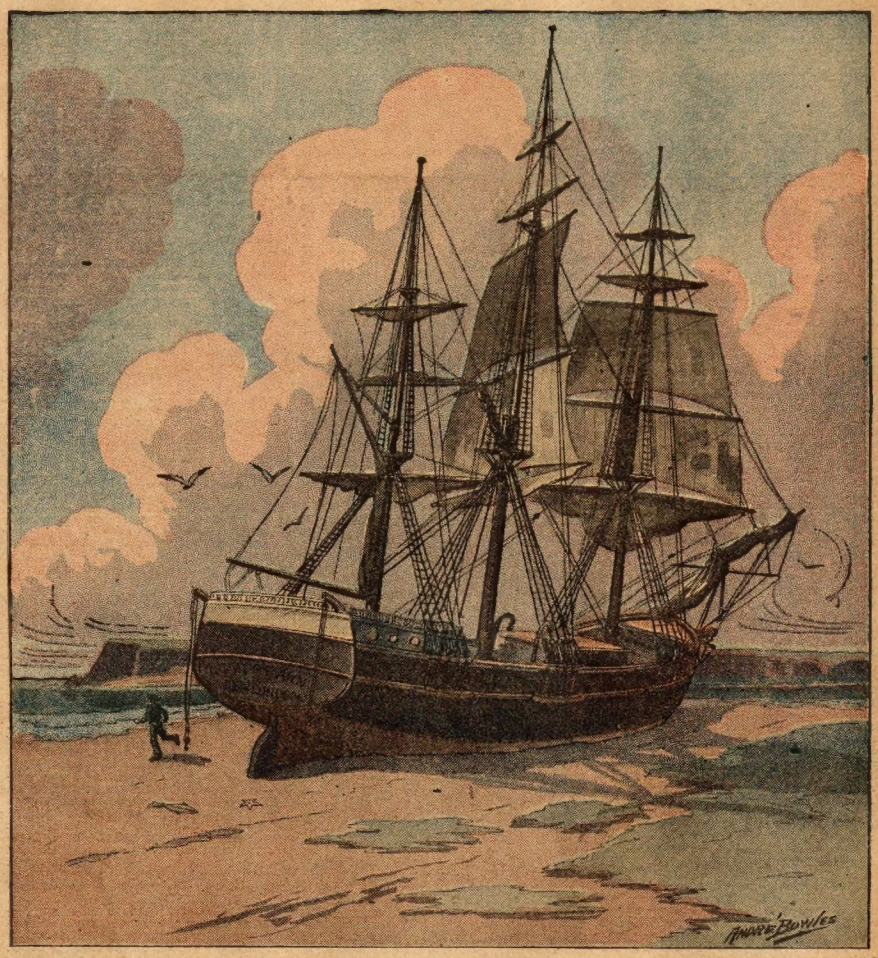
"It is too bad about Captain Steele."

It was too bad. A few days before we had run into a gale, battled with it for two days, saved the ship and most of her standing-rigging and canvas, but in the midst of it a huge sea boarded us, and when it was gone the quarter-deck was swept clean. The captain and first mate had gone overboard, never more to be seen until the sea gives up its dead. And thus it was that Loren Knapp came to command the Happy Ann. At one stroke fate had promoted him two numbers, advancing him from the starboard watch to the cabin.

The Happy Ann was a New London ship of four hundred tons. She belonged to Howell Brothers, and had been afloat only two years. The present voyage was to carry stores to certain settlements on the Pacific islands, a large part of her lading being destined for missionaries in different places. Her cargo was clothing, household articles, food, and the like, things that would be needed by dwellers in that far-away, little explored ocean.

It was a memorable voyage for me, for a young fellow obliged to make my way in the world, it was the first time I had signed the shipping articles as an able seaman, and when I wrote down my name with a flourish, I admit that I was filled with pride. If one goes to sea it is good to be something better than an ordinary seaman. Speaking of the signing, I wrote "Thomas Allen," and that was my baptismal inheritance.

As the dog-watch hauled along we noticed a more ominous appearance in the west. The brassy sky grew more angry, and added to it was a blackness that grew in size, though it did not wholly shut out the lurid hues before described. Also, the sea began to wrinkle more perceptibly, and a puff of wind now and then struck us athwartship from the same quarter. There was prospect of something which would fill our sails,



I brought up in the scuppers.

but, somehow, Seth had sobered us and nobody clamored for too much of it.

Our position, as I understood it, was about latitude 6 degrees, 14 minutes south, and longitude 178 degrees, 15 minutes west. Since rounding Cape Horn we had touched at Pitcairn and the Navigator Islands, and numerous bits of land between, and we had the far-away Carolines on our larboard bow when the wind fell away, that being our final objective point.

I was in the starboard division, so, having a watch below from eight to twelve, I was looking forward to it when Captain Knapp came on deck. He was a fine-looking young man, and I had never seen anything to justify the common prejudice against him. It was true that he was of a prominent family, and perhaps owed his rapid rise to influence. So the crew believed, hence their expression that "he had come in through the cabin window." Rich or poor, with or without influence, he had been in charge of my watch from New London to the Pacific, and I believed him a capable sailor and officer. He certainly had done well when we lost our other officers in the gale.

Now, as soon as he came from below and swept the horizon, he saw the angry sky. He watched it briefly, held up a hand to the flaws of air, and then called both mates. They were named Stone and Barker. The former had been carpenter before we lost our captain, and Barker had been taken from the larboard division. Both were capable sailors, though as rough as Knapp was refined. Our new captain talked with them for some time, and all three eyed the sky together. There was no sign of alarm, but they would have be n dull pates not to read that ugly quarter.

Eight bells struck, my watch went below, and we turned in. When I awakened, after some hours of rest, I found a big change on. We had picked up the wind with a will, the Happy Ann was footing it along under canvas, and, in place of the calm, we had a stiff breeze that made the hull-timbers strain and the rigging turn out its music under the hard send. Even the forecastle seemed to shrink away from the pile-like blows against our weather beam.

I had barely taken this in clearly when three blows sounded on the scuttle-back and there was a call to shorten sail. We heard and tumbled out in haste. "All hands," meant something.

We came out on a risky deck. The Happy Ann was driving in a riot of waters, her lee bulkwark threatening to go under and her weather side high in air, though not so high but the piling seas were splashing over her rail. Though not yet in real peril, it surely was time to reduce canvas. Captain Knapp, himself, gave the orders, for the mate, though a good sailor, was new to the quarter-deck. The orders came swift, clear, and inclusive. Not wanting to lose his masts, he had decided to bring her about and run before it. This was good judgment, for his reckoning showed clear waters and the Ann was at home with the worst seas astern.

Getting our orders, we sprang for the shrouds and were soon footing it up the ratlines, nimbly reaching our posts to haul away at the wind-hard canvas. Hard as the climb was, I noticed even then that the air was strangely hot, and that we had a humidity new to my experience under such conditions. We had a smart struggle in the darkness, but sail was finally shortened, and the Ann was put about. Now we had the gale astern, and though there was much straining, snapping, and groaning, both below and aloft, she rode the seas bravely.

Free from work, the sailors began to criticise the captain secretly again, showing themselves radical forecastle grumblers, but in the midst of the storm Knapp remained cool, alert, and, as far as man could be, master of the situation. No grumbling could alter the fact that he was handling the ship admirably, but, for that matter, no such small things as facts could convince his critics.

There was still no rain, but the sky was growing blacker. Then, too, distant lightning began playing in quick, jerky flashes, though without thunder. I was looking at the ominous scene when I noticed Seth Styles near me.

"What do you expect?" I asked, and I think my voice was weak.

"Something worse, lad," the veteran replied. "There's mischief in the wind. When she hits, look sharp. Something is comin'!"

CHAPTER II.

IN THE WILD NIGHT.

All through the darkness the gale held, as did the unnatural sultriness, the black heavens, and the lightning, but the rain was delayed. It came at six bells in the larboard watch, at first in spits and then in a regular, biting drive, after which mist settled heavily.

The deck was in charge of Mr. Barker, the promoted forecastle hand, and it was not to my liking that he was disposed to magnify his new office, strutting about with absurd pride. Another matter even more objectionable was that he held a long discourse with Dave Girdle, one of his cronies, but they separated abruptly as Captain Knapp, who had been sleeping, came on deck.

Later, Dave talked with some of his sympathizers, and as a result discussion became brisk as to whether the skipper really knew where we were, or was running blindly. This absurdity was stoutly combatted by Seth Styles, Ben Gustin, and Steve Radd, but it is hard to quiet a foolish idea let loose in a ship.

The day passed with the wind holding its weight and rain falling heavily Knapp went below only to eat, and his modest, alert air was good to see. Believing fully in his skill, I felt that it was next to impossible for such a man to run the Ann aground ignorantly.

At four bells after midnight it was my trick at the wheel. Both Dave Girdle, whom I relieved, and Mr. Barker gave me the course and I never steered more carefully, watching the compass vigilantly. Half an hour later the captain, who had been below, came on deck and looked at the card. Then I saw him start.

"You are off the course, Allen!" he exclaimed.

"It's as 'twas given to me, sir," I returned. "Two points south of east."

"Who gave you the course?"

"Both Mr. Barker and Dave Girdle, sir. Dave had the trick before me."

"Are you certain you got it as you claim?"

"Absolutely certain, sir."

"Two points south of east?"

"Yes, sir."

He turned away abruptly, walked to where Barker stood by the weather rail, and addressed him. I pricked up my ears, for I knew that if we were off the course it might prove a serious matter. Unfortunately, I could overhear little that was said, though I caught the word "mistake" from the second mate. Upon whom he was saddling the alleged mistake I did not know, but his manner soon grew humble and deferential, while the captain was clearly peremptory. Presently he returned to the wheel.

"Put her head due southeast," he directed.

I answered cheerily and obeyed, and we swung to our old course. The master fell to pacing slowly, but the pitching deck was not the place for that sort of occupation then, and he settled down directly.

The question was in my mind whether he understood in full. For my part I did understand. Incipient mutiny was afoot on the Happy Ann. The forecastle talk pointed to the truth. Barker had deliberately thrown the run of the ship, and a deep uneasiness was upon me. I wondered if the skipper now knew where we were and what sea-room we had. It had been bad enough before, for islands dotted the Pacific thickly, but how were we to avoid them when we were so far wide of the line of flight chosen by Captain Knapp?

At six bells, after a marked increase in the violence of wind and sea, Seth Styles was sent to act as my wheel-mate, and we soon had our fill of difficulty to hold the ship to her course. Seth had moved to take what, with the partly quartering wind, was the weather helm, and knowing his great strength, I had not disputed him. He buckled to his task manfully, and, as usual, proved his worth.

"New second mate when this gale falls off," he remarked as we tugged together.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Logic, Thomas! All in the Ann knows that Barker put her on a new course without orders. Cap'n Knapp ain't fool enough to have a row in a big blow, but wait until she clears away. Barker has lost his sticks!"

"He has taken us nobody knows where."

"There is the ugliness of it. The skipper had to use a deal of guessin' anyhow, but it's guessin' double now. Nobody knows what is under our forefoot."

"And the worst of it is, the gale is making fresh gains."

"Shipmate, this 'ere is a queer gale. With that sky that started her off, and the sultriness an' general depression, like as if we had been stewed with foul air, we can't get out of it without more trouble. Mind your eye, lad, for here's a big one!"

He had broken off abruptly to speak the last words, some excitement in his manner and tone, and there was reason for it. The Happy Ann was rising, as if lifted by a marine monster, and we were afoul of a vast sea that, though raising us, did not, fortunately board us fully. We were whipped about like toys, and Captain Knapp came to our side.

"When," he asked, "did you last see anything like this, Seth?"

"Can't say I ever did, sir," replied the old salt. "It's off the usual piece, but different—different, sir. Unless it tires itself out with threatenin', we shall have it full an' lusty bimeby."

"And," added the skipper, bitterly, "that fellow has taken us out of our course."

"Beg pardon, sir, but have we sea-room?"

"Providence only knows!"

With this the speaker walked off and left us to ourselves.

'Nobody can blame him if we come to grief," said Seth, sob.rly. "We are where Barker put us, not the skipper." We had little time to discuss the point, for the first great, swelling wave was followed by others, and waves unlike those I had ever seen before. The air seemed to grow more sultry, and lightning played along the western horizon, not with rapid flashes, but slowly, sullenly and angrily. Also, there was another lull in the wind, and though the seas must of necessity be in a drive we did not race as wildly as when the hull and rigging were buffeted so violently.

This was the state of affairs when, suddenly, a loud, warning cry came from somebody—I never knew who—and a swift glance astern revealed a strange and startling sight. A vast, towering wave was sweeping upon us, not as a cloud of froth and foam, but a mountain of water that seemed as if the waters of the deep had been lifted at once and sent rolling.

I heard wild shouts, heard a keen, sharp order, but no words did I distinguish. While yet that ominous wall was some fathoms away, the ship rose upon the sea that gathered beneath her—rose as if she was to be lifted in air, and then, somehow—no man could tell how—the Happy Ann was hoisted to the top of the watery mountain.

Forward we carried, a fathom, thirty fathoms, and perhaps more, and then the wave subsided, slowly, steadily, and the ship settled with it. There was a shock which shook her throughout, a shock that wrenched the wheel from my grasp and sent me pulling until I brought up in the scuppers with a thud painful to bear.

I was not badly injured, and, immediately thoughtful of my duty, I leaped up, plunged forward, and had hold of the wheel again. My fingers closed tightly, but I did not "feel" her—the wheel was like a dead thing in my grasp. And the hull did not pulse beneath my feet, nor the deck careen to leeward. I stood dazed, for the instant unable to comprehend, but I suddenly saw Seth by my side, and his voice broke in upon my thoughts.

"Aground!" he exclaimed.

Before I could answer Captain Knapp passed us with long stride, shouting orders, and the seamen pressed to the rails. Then came a chorus of excited cries.

"Land on our larboard beam!"

"Land on our starboard beam!"

"Land astern!"

"Land on our bows!"

"Aground!" repeated Seth, coolly.

I ran to the waist and looked for myself. Dull as the light was it told as much as had been said. We were no longer afloat. Instead of the swelling, pitching ocean we had something alongside us, even under our counter, that did not move.

The truth had been told. The unhappy ship, astray in mid-Pacific, was lying far up on land, wrecked, helpless, betrayed by a knave.

CHAPTER III.

WITH LIFE AT STAKE.

A period of amazement and consternation followed. With the Happy Ann aground we were in serious plight, for it came to us that there was grave doubt that a ship driven ashore by such a wave could ever be got off. High tide was a baby in comparison with the mighty volume of water that had cast us up.

"A tidal wave!" one man had said. "That's what it was."

"I've seen tidal waves," Seth replied, "but never one like that. It didn't rear up and fling itself upon us—which would have crushed us mighty near flat—but the water swelled under us, lifted us, and then just dropped us light and easy. I reckon it would be called a tidal wave, but it was not like any other I've seen. Lucky for the ship, too."

"I don't believe she has started a seam or butt," added Ben Gustin.

Astonishing as this was, there seemed good reason to think it true in part. The Ann had settled as the brave usually sided, and scarcely anything more than straining marked her new taking of position. It was really past belief. How had the ship escaped being crushed?

We were now in a situation puzzling to us. The gale continued, and our topmasts trembled before the attack of the wind, but not a pounding sea beat upon our hull. Spray, of course, dashed wildly over the deck, but, otherwise it was almost as if we had driven into an area of calm. Land was on all sides, and so much of it that we found our most serious trouble in that fact.

How were we to get out of our difficulty? The captain Knapp was very busy, though there was nothing to do but investigate. Actual effort must be reserved for day, which would show us how matters stood. In his looking about he did not have the help of his officers. Remaining cool and systematic, he uttered no complaint, but he ignored Barker persistently and that fellow finally slunk away and afterward held aloof. Mate Stone had been injured when we went aground, getting a bad blow when his head thumped against the bulwark, and he was now in his berth below, half-unconscious.

The remainder of the night was long, but day finally dawned. What we saw was this: The Happy Ann was on an island of perhaps two acres, and almost in its center. Beyond rolled a subsiding sea, foam-crested and angry. On three sides the prospect was unmarked by land, but on the east, and separated only by a narrow strait sixty fathoms wide, was another, larger island or what we supposed to be one, though the high cliff at its edge shut off full view. A mile beyond this cliff was a low mountain, a barren, black peak rising two thousand feet or more into the air.

Caught in this strange place there was talk enough on our deck to fill a book, but it amounted to nothing for some time. The main points were, first, that the Ann was hopelessly aground, and, second, that we had other land off our bows. When the captain had looked the scene over carefully he went below and was gone twenty minutes. Returning, he walked to where Seth and I stood in the larboard waist.

"Styles," he said quietly, "you have sailed this ocean more than anybody else of our party. Do you know where we are? Look sharp! Here is this inhabitable land and the larger stretch beyond. Chief of all, there is the bald mountain. Where are we?"

"I'd tell ye if I could, sir," Seth returned, "but it gets me. I never saw the place before nor heard of it. Beggin' pardon, ain't it charted?"

"No. There is the pinch. Really, there is nothing strange in that fact, for our charts of the Pacific are not perfect as yet. As for our dilemma, we were driven far by the gale, and then Barker put us off our course deliberately. At noon I will take the sun, but it is certain that the land is not charted. Do you notice the peculiar appearance of that mountain? What does it suggest?"

"Why, sir, as to that, it's been in my head 'twas an extinct volcano."

"There you hit it. The glass shows that its side is dark, broken, and seamed with wide gashes, while not a patch of green is to be seen. If vegetation won't grow in this latitude there is a reason for it. The mountain is an old volcano."

"Sorry, sir, that I never heard of it."

"All right, Seth. I'll take the will for the knowledge," and the captain smiled genially. "Naturally, our first move will be to see more of the larger island, and I shall soon have the starboard quarter boat tugged to the strait and launched."

With this he walked away. Soon after he sent me below on duty, and when I came on deck again, half an hour later, he had carried out his plan. The boat was afloat, and, with himself steering, was being rowed southward through the narrow waterway. The cliff prevented easy landing near by, it seemed, so the party moved along the base in search of a lower spot.

For some time I watched them go, and then I was seized with a desire to go aloft and learn what was to be seen there. The captain had, of course, already done this, but I did not know his discoveries. A glass was lying near, and, as discipline was relaxed and Mate Barker invisible, I took it and went up the ratlines. Before I reached the cross-trees the boat disappeared around a bend in the high shore, but the glass was useful for my real purpose.

The cliff shut off the surface of the land, so I saw only treetops there, but the mountain was before me—a black, irregular cone, in places looking as smooth as a bowl, elsewhere ribbed, gashed, and cleft in all directions, and with a baldness and bleakness so unusual to the tropics that I was willing to believe it an extinct volcano.

Later, I was about to descend, when, sweeping the coast with the gl..s, I suddenly had a boat in the lenses, and not that lately gone away from the Happy Ann. And that boat quickly gave me a scare.

Some twenty scantily-clad, brown-bodied men were between the gunwales, a portion paddling and the others at rest, but only a dull pate would have marked them as the gentle natives common to so many of the Pacific islands.

The crew were armed to an extreme. Spears rose above dusky heads, and war-clubs were held in muscular hands. Worse yet, a pole rose over them, evidently set as a mast is stepped for a sail, and on its top, as its only adjunct, two long bones were affixed in the form of a cross.

Instantly I had the startling theory that they were cannibals, and the bones those of a victim of their shocking practices.

Besides the men a woman was in the canoe, seated on some object that brought her above the level of her associates. I saw a tall young person with flowing black hair and limited attire of red and orange that was surely gay and brilliant, while not really over-gaudy. Her favored position suggested that she was ruler of the men.

Realizing that these were no peaceful Kanakas, but desperate warriors, and probably pillagers and cannibals, I lingered only to make my survey complete. As I left the shrouds I met Barker, and as he was the only officer aboard fit for duty I made my report. Experienced sailor that he was he appraised my words at their true value.

"A war-party, eh, and headed this way? Natives in these waters are either iambs or tigers. They are bound to see us, and that means a fight. Dave Girdle, have the arms-chest opened and our weapons out. We will blow them out of the water if they attack. We may be able——"

He stopped short, grasping at a new idea.

"We must save our mates. They went south and this gang is north, so a messenger has a chance to slip through unseen. Tom Allen, will you go?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" I returned, briskly.

"Then lose no time. Hump yourself!"

With the crew hurrying to prepare for defense I swung over the rail and dropped to the ground, scurrying toward the strait. For a little distance I trod on firm land, but it soon became porous, my feet sinking and bringing water to the surface. Gaining the strait, I plunged

in, finding that the way was free from the heavy swell outside and easy swimming.

How was I best to serve my absent shipmates? The bit of a promontory where their boat had disappeared was half a mile away, so it seemed best that I should scale the cliff. At that point it looked impossible, but after I had swum a third of the way to the point there was a change. I made at the barrier, climbed hard, and reached the top.

From that place the level of the island, except for the scattered trees, was open to view, but I gave no heed to it then, my only thought being of Knapp and his boat-crew.

Looking south I failed to discover them, but did see enough to give me a new puzzle. Beyond the ribbon-narrow end of the lesser island rocks rose thick above the sea, and with the westerly swell rolling in and beating upon them, the water leaped high and angrily at the cliff. No boat would run that pinch of breakers. What had become of the captain and his men?

I began a sweeping glance around the island, and then discovered more than I expected. For the first time I noticed that the north end of the land was indented by a cove twenty fathoms in diameter, and that, probably to get smoother water, the canoe was then traversing it. In a way it was the same old gang, for the swarthy boatmen plied their blades easily and deliberately, but now they were nearer to me, and I could see that they were as ugly of face as were their war-clubs barbarous and threatening. Mere butchers they looked to me. But something else was impressive.

The young woman was now standing upright, a gaudy but, physically, really marvelous figure of artistic development. One round arm was partly raised, and her hollowed hand shaded her eyes, while, probably to con the boat, she watched the water off its forefoot. She was a fine picture of barbarian nature, but it was no time to dwell upon things artistic. The war-party was too near the ship.

Wheeling, I again swept the island to the south, but, seeing nothing of the captain or his men, I started along the cliff-top, running as rapidly as the rough way would permit. This I kept up until I saw the breakers just below, which, of course, brought me half a mile away from the Happy Ann. For good or evil, for good luck or ill, I was cast upon my own resources. My attempt was a lone venture.

The disappearance of the boat and my mates worried me, though it was not mysterious. Of course, they had found a spot to land, and after that the thick mat of vegetation, trees and bushes, would hide them. I had only to hurry along and find them. So I thought, little knowing what I was to see next.

Up to that time I had neglected to scan the island at large to locate the huts of the natives, and it was too late to do it, but, while sacrificing much to speed, I did not lose all sense of prudence. To be discovered might mean capture and a horrible death, so I took pains not to crash in the underbrush, and to avoid betraying sounds as much as possible.

I was going light-footed, when, with shapely trees above my head an increase of light told me there was an open space beyond. I flung out my hands, parted the shoots of the bushes before me, and was about to continue my way, when I saw that which brought me to a startled halt.

Before me was a glade, and within it a score of swarthy, fierce-faced natives were dancing around a stake set in the ground, flinging their hands aloft, brandishing war-clubs and knives, and reminding me of fiends let loose from the abode of the lost people of darkness. And tied to the stake were two white persons, young women in the garments of civilization.

I stood aghast. I knew I was looking upon helpless captives of my own race; I knew they were in the power of natives of shocking cruelty, and threatened with a terrible fate. Seeing this, I remained motionless, horror-stricken and dismayed. What manner of a place was that unknown island?

CHAPTER IV.

IN CLOSE QUARTERS.

I stood still in the bushes, and, ignoring the dance around the stake, scanned the captives. In the early hour of womanhood, and, I thought, very pretty, they wore clothing that was proof they had but lately come from civilized parts. I suspected that the same gale had brought them into their plight that had taken the Happy Ann to the uncharted island. The poor creatures were meeting the danger better than I dared expect, for they did not swoon, and their alarm was mixed with indignation. Probably they did not wholly realize their peril.

I had been fumbling at my pistol, ready to rush forward and fight in their behalf if necessary, but as my head grew clearer I saw that, with no evidence that immediate violence was intended, craft was better than wrong-headed courage. Common sense demanded that I find Captain Knapp and his men and have a boat's crew at my back.

I moved softly away, my face toward where I supposed my mates to be, but had gone less than two hundred yards when a crashing in the bushes sent me to cover again. It was well I took the precaution.

The adjacent bushes opened and a score of natives appeared, bearing the Happy Ann's small quarter-boat on their shoulders. Then I had a fresh shock. If they had despoiled Captain Knapp, what had they done with him? Bearing the vicious faces now familiar to me, they were, for the moment, in good humor, laughing and jesting in their heathen language.

When they receded, I moved again, and, back-tracking them, was led to the water. There, in a bit of cove with a miniature beach, I found where the boat had first been driven ashore. There, too, I found the footprints of my shipmates, but, being no trailer, soon lost them. Believing they must have ascended the cliff and then gone south, I hastened the same way, still looking for tracks.

For an eighth of a mile I went, and then my name was called. Turning, I saw Steve Radd, one of Knapp's companions and a very good man.

"Get to cover, Tom!" he added, hurriedly.

"Where are our mates?" I demanded.

"I'm afraid they're captured. They left me to reconnoiter a native village we saw from the cliff, and they didn't come back. Somebody else did. It was the cannibals."

"How do you know they are cannibals?"

"I happened on a heap of human bones. Don't that talk plain?"

"Tell me everything," I urged.

"Well, it's like this," he replied. "When we left the ship we soon fetched to breakers betwixt the two islands, so we had to haul ashore. The skipper left me to guard the boat while he and the rest scouted. My orders didn't confine me to the boat, so I climbed the bank above me. I saw the captain and all hands going toward the village. Next I saw a war-party coming this way, so I took to the bushes. They lugged the boat off, and since then I've been doin' some pretty tall hiding."

"Have you heard fighting near the village?"

"No."

"Steve, we've got to go that way and warn the captain. I don't think he is captured yet, and our duty is plain. Come!"

"Tom," said Steve grimly, "I've always suspected you of being a special kind of fool, an' now I know it, but if you're idiot enough to run your nose into that trap, I suppose I ought to go along to hear your dyin' words. Another way of puttin' it is that this island seems to be alive with hostile natives, an' one place is as safe for us as another. What I really want to do is to scud back to the Happy Ann, but I was set to watch that boat, an' snap my topmasts if I'm goin' to run like a scared rabbit!"

Before I could answer there was a sound of firearms off northward.

"Eh?" Steve cried. "What's afoot?"

"The ship is attacked!"

"Blow my gaskets loose! Is this whole island seethin' with rows?"

"Looks like it, and our party is separated. We must get together or we shall be exterminated. At a rough guess the natives outnumber us ten to one, and it may be thirty to one, for all I know. To work, Steve!"

"Captain or ship?"

"Barker and our mates can hold the ship, having the cover of its bulwarks. The rest of our party is in a bad fix, though I wonder at Captain Knapp being caught in such a mess. He's a level-headed man."

"You vouch for him, but who vouches for us?"

I had already started in the direction where we supposed our skipper to be, and Radd was keeping close to my side. Possibly there was some force in his question, but I passed it by. Sharp risk we surely must run if we went toward the village, but I was not the man to desert shipmates, and Radd, though he grumbled, was as cool as I could wish. Indeed, he volunteered to show me the pile of bones that had so impressed him, but I did not aspire to see them, so I declined.

Making a deviation to the south we tried to pick up Knapp's trail, but failed to find it, so we swung around to the east and crept along under the trees, bound for the point to which Steve said the others had gone, but intending to give the village a wide berth. If once we got within its limits we were as good as lost to the world. We sagely planned to avoid it carefully, but, in so doing, we forgot a most important factor in the case.

"I beg that you will help us!"

The trees, bushes and other plants about us were of tropical growth, which meant that they were thick and often tangled. We who knew a ship from keel to topmast were about as fit for the island jungle as two children, and we found it out later.

We were still creeping along when, parting an unusually thick growth, we almost ran into a hut. Nobody was visible near it, but we turned back and nearly collided with another of the same sort. Then came the sound of crashing among the bushes and chattering voices, and we realized that we were near a large party of men.

As one we sank to the earth, and none too soon. The natives appeared, and with them the two white girls I had before seen. The confession is hardly complimentary to me, but I had forgotten them in the rush of other events. There they were, however, thus far unharmed, it seemed, but, surrounded by the rugged warriors, surely in desperate peril.

"Thunder!" gasped Steve.

"Mate," I asked, "can we get them clear?"

"Get blazes clear! It's ourselves we need to worry about."

"They are white girls."

"I feel white, myself."

"It will never do for us to desert them."

"Oh! crazy sticks!" groaned Radd.

He spoke according to a fixed habit, yet I felt that if I led the way he would then and there rush out to engage in a hot fight in their behalf. I was not reckless enough to counsel it. Silently vowing that they should not be left to perish miserably, I hung to cover and waited for the right moment to strike. As long as they were offered no indignity hasty action was not needed.

Neither captors no prisoners saw us. They went past, the natives still chattering in their good humor, but the girls drooping, pale, wretched. Dragged along by the brutes they had lost all hope, and their fears suggested the worst. For their sakes, I hoped they did not know the islanders were maneaters.

Unwilling to lose sight of the young women, I crept close to the first-discovered but again, went a trifle farther than at first, and then parted the bushes that fringed its side. Before me was an open space of a full acre, with shanties fronting upon it from all quarters, and there the girls were halted.

They were in the center of the village, and we lacked but a trifle of being as badly off, save that we were thus far free.

"Pretty as twin peaches!" muttered Radd, at my elbow.

"What will happen if we risk a rush?"

"We shall furnish beefsteaks for the crowd!"

"Some thing must be done."

"Wait, shipmate, wait! You can't help them girls by cuttin' your own throat." Steve had an older, cooler head than mine, and it helped me then. My fears for the young women urged me on to reckless efforts, but he put ice on the fever of my ambitions. So we lay low, while the natives, dropping all frivolity, consulted. The murmur of their heathen words came dully to us, but we knew nothing that was said. The result was less obscure. The girls were thrust into a hut and a guard posted at the door. Then the men fell to consultation again, apparently having difficult problems to deal with, often looking toward the sea, and especially toward the northwest, where the Happy Ann lay in her inglorious dilemma.

Radd finally plucked at my sleeve and advised retreat, but when we experimented a trifle we found that it was not so easy. Those huts hard by us had disgorged native women, and they fairly hemmed us in. Even had we been zealous to go, it would have been impossible.

A full hour we were held there, and then there was a change. Some sort of rude artificial call came on the breeze, like a blast upon a seashell, and the natives one and all grew eager. Stirring restlessly they gazed toward the northwest, staring at the mass of trees as if to see something definitely expected.

"What is it?" Steve whispered.

"Possibly more prisoners, though it may be returning comrades of theirs," I replied.

"Can they have captured our mates in the ship?"

It was a troublesome thought, and when the undergrowth gave out the crackling that told of advancing persons, I peered from my cover with anxious interest. Not until the last moment did anybody appear, and then a single individual passed the fringe of bushes.

It was the queen of the islanders.

CHAPTER V.

HARD PRESSED.

The woman lost no part of her impressive appearance by being seen close at hand. Lacking no more than two inches of six feet in height, she had a physique where unusual muscle was overlaid with just enough flesh to make her look at the best, while every stretch and curve was the superlative of symmetry, even as her movements were grace personified. Add to this that her native costume was clean and well-made, and the effect may be realized in part. Even the broad ribbons with which she had bedecked neck, arms and bust were cunningly placed, telling of marked good taste.

But her face—there was both less and more to be said of that. A symmetrical face it was, and one of bold and dashing beauty, but the cruelty that lurked in its lines, in the stubborn mouth and the passionate eyes, repelled intensely. But the half remains to be told.

Sunbrowned though she was almost to the hue of her people, she was surely of white blood. This fact amazed me. A white person of either sex was not to be expected there on terms of friendship with the dusky natives, while that a woman of my own race should be in a position of authority violated all the claims of probability.

From the first it was evident that she was in ill temper. She marched into the center of the glade with a firm planting of feet and an imperious manner, and then fell to asking questions swiftly. What they were I did not know, for she used the barbarian language of the islanders, but she was clear to her followers. They replied humbly, as if in awe of her. A full five minutes she had them under catechism, and then she suddenly stirred and gave an order. Hearing it, four men went to the hut into which the two girls had been placed, and after a brief pause they reappeared, leading the captives.

The bedecked woman eyed them coldly, contemptuously, while they returned her regard with interest. A flickering hope

seemed to be in their minds, though I doubted that they discovered her white blood. A long stare she gave them, and then arrogantly addressed them. To my surprise she now used the English tongue.

"Who are you?" she asked brusquely, harshly.

"Oh!" cried one of the captives, "I am so glad somebody speaks a language we can understand——"

"Never mind what you understand," the queen snapped. "Answer me! Who are you?"

"We are shipwrecked girls——"

"I did not suppose you came here horseback. What's your name?"

"Mildred Parish."

"And hers?"

"She is my sister, Olive."

"Where is your home, and how did you get here?"

"Our home is in San Francisco, and we left there a month ago in the brig Sunshine. The master was Captain Hale. We were caught in the great gale that has just ended, the captain was lost, and finally the vessel was wrecked on land near here. The crew took to the long boat and deserted us. We wandered ashore and were found by these—by these men. Oh! I pray that you will defend us! It is so joyful to meet one of our own sex, and one at liberty. We are frightened by our situation—I beg that you will help us!"

With this the fair pleader held out her clasped hands, beseeching mutely as well as in speech, but the queen stood cold and forbidding.

"I will do nothing for you!" she curtly exclaimed. "You had no business to come here. You should have gone with your ship's crew."

"But they went away unknown to us."

"Bah! More likely you knew all about it, and were only afraid of getting your feet wet. Such creatures as you two, shaped like so many strings, have about as much courage as a bird. I will do nothing for you."

"But," cried the second girl, "we are women like yourself——"

"Wrong! Instead of that, you are women like dolls. I have seen dolls before now. Go back to your hut, you idiotic, pale-faced scum! The way of this island forbids us to treat women as we do men, but one thing we can do for you. You will marry two of our island men!"

At this they cried out together, and in great terror, but the queen gave them a contemptuous glance.

"I only wish that matters were now as in old times. Once, two or three hundred years ago, when this island was fifty times its present size, a burning volcano was near, and when my people did not see fit to eat their prisoners, they were cast into the pit of lava. For nearly two hundred years the volcano has been cold and utterly dead, but its mutilated shell remains."

She stretched out her hand, a finger pointing to the bald elevation already mentioned by me.

"There it is," she added. "There stands Hat-ba-ro, the Fiery One!"

I do not know whether Mildred and Olive looked, but I instictively turned my own gaze upon the bald mountain. It was black, grim, and repulsive now, but the queen's description had made its history very different from its present condition.

"Changed as it is," she pursued, "we hold to the earlier name. To us it is still the Fiery One, though, if our religion did not forbid our going there, we might wander for hours among its thousand passages and never feel volcanic heat nor catch the fumes of volcanic sulphur."

She had been meditative, but she suddenly shifted her gaze back to the captives. Scornfully regarding them, she gave an order, and Mildred and Olive were dragged away, crying for help, and again thrust into the hut.

Steve Radd had laid a restraining hand upon my arm, but I had no mind to leap into view and woo chivalry by losing my life. It was folly to plead with the merciless queen, and worse folly to attack the large number of natives.

The queen was still in bad temper, and she ordered her men around like dogs, and as servilely as dogs they obeyed her. Presently she walked away, and some of the men drifted in different directions, but enough remained to hold us fast in the thicket.

I was thinking of the girls and wondering how I could aid them when Steve's voice stole in upon my study.

"If our shipmates were taken there would be a pile of excitement," he said. "The firing nigh the Happy Ann was brief, so we can believe our mates there drove the gang off, but here we be, split up into three parties when we should be together. Bad, bad!"

"We've got to get away," I replied, anxiously, "but how can we?"

It was a timely question, for the natives were all about us. They remained, and all day we were held in the bushes. Often they passed within five feet of us, and though they did not discover us, they shut off retreat absolutely. Exasperating as it was, we had reason to thank Providence that our lives were still our own. Meanwhile, Steve and I agreed that we would rescue the girls or die trying.

Darkness fell, and the islanders gathered in groups to eat. It was our chance, and we crept away on hands and knees, our course a circle toward the prison hut. And no alarm came from the chattering natives.

Reaching the rear of the structure, I found that its sides were wholly open, but the darkness prevented our seeing who was there. Time was vitally precious, and elaborate methods impossible, so, though I was in great fear that abrupt disclosures would cause the girls to cry out, it was clear that I must risk immediate and direct words. I risked them.

"Ladies," said I, "are you there?"

"Who speaks?" was the quick response from the darkness.

"A friend! Are you Mildred and Olive?"

"Yes, yes! Do you come from the ship?"

"I do," I replied, not thinking it a time to explain what ship. "I am here to take you away. Are you bound?"

"Yes, to the post of the hut."

"You shall soon be out. Be careful not to raise your voices."

I groped along, and found them without difficulty. They had been tied in such a way that they were helpless, but I had my ship-knife, and I used it rapidly. A few strokes severed their bonds and they stood erect beside me.

"Now," I added, "let us waste neither time nor words. We must go by the rear, and then slip off under the trees. I have a friend to aid me. Follow without fear. We will do our best."

The courage with which they obeyed was encouraging, and we lost no time. A few steps took us out of the hut, and then, when Steve joined us, we began the flight from the village. I had tried to plan our course, and I made no mistake, yet it was mere good luck that nothing went amiss. Sometimes we passed within a few feet of moving natives, but by stopping briefly to let them go on, we avoided discovery. Steve hung at the rear, a faithful and keen-eyed guard, and no mishap befell us.

We left the village behind and hurried toward where the Happy Ann lay, but it was not until we were well advanced that I paused and gave the girls a chance to talk. When I did stop I told them in brief words that I was not of their ship's party, but a sailor from another vessel. Surprised, they were content as long as safe, and they gave us thanks in warm words.

There could be no real delay until we were safe in the Ann, so we hurried forward once more. Unchecked by foes, we presently stood upon the cliff that overlooked the stranded ship.

"Why, mate!" exclaimed Radd, "the old hooker is dark."

"Do you see anybody moving on her deck?" I asked, my triumph somehow falling away.

"Not a soul. Can it be our mates are captured?"

"Impossible! Their favorable position and weapons would enable them to hold out against all the islanders. No doubt they are crouched behind the bulwarks, keeping their vigil, yet it is equally likely that some of the cannibals lurk close aboard of her. I dare not hail, so we must take another way."

"That dark deck an' that dead silence worries me," said Steve bluntly. "I'm mighty afraid the ship is deserted!"

I felt like reproving him sharply for such a suggestion in the hearing of the rescued captives, yet the elements in the situation that he had mentioned gave me sharp uneasiness. The situation was mysterious. Had we come back to our ship only to find it abandoned?

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The Diamond Mouse

Or, THE BLACK DOCTOR'S PLOT

By Captain Jack Judson

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CHAPTER V.

WHAT SELINA SAW.

THE theft of the Diamond Mouse and the murder of Lady Constance were events calculated to throw the manor of Ravenswood into the greatest mystery and turmoil. The denizens of the neighborhood heard nothing of the first catastrophe, although the Mouse Legend was not unknown to them.

Very few beyond the house itself had ever set eyes upon the Pretender's legacy. Lady Constance had guarded it with great care, and it was believed to be safe in a place known only to her. The old story was that just before the loss of the Mouse a woman in white made her appearance, and this story had become a part of the prevailing legend. If there was anything in the curse, swift and sure had been the doom of the last of the Cheverlys.

Ravenswood would descend to Estelle, with its broad acres, its manor house, and many servants. The girl had grown up among these scenes. Left an orphan at an early age, she had been adopted by Lady Constance, and into her life, when she was grown, had come Sylvan Roche, the scion of a good Virginia family and a young man worthy of the love which she had bestowed upon him.

Among the slaves attached to the manor was a young girl of Estelle's age named Selina. They had been playmates together, their pleasures had been the same, in so far as their stations in life permitted, and the octoroon had given Estelle the adoration of her warm nature.

It was on the night of the two exciting events which have been narrated that Selina, in passing home from the house occupied by Yellow Chloe, was startled to catch sight of a flitting figure clad in white. The girl stopped at once, for the sight was unusual. She had heard from Estelle's lips the story of the Diamond Mouse, along with the purported coming of the mysterious White Woman just before its disappearances, and with the credulity of her race she had drunk in every word as absolute truth.

To see the white-clad form among the trees was to associate with it the loss of the Pretender's charm. Selina drew hastily to one side, and, as the moon was shining through the trees, kept her eyes riveted upon the apparition.

Suddenly the storm broke, and the gusts of rain swept through the timber, drenching the octoroon, but failing to divert her from her avowed purpose of watching the White Woman. She knew she must have been near the manor house, for she was moving from it when discovered, and Selina crept after her with the stealth of a practiced spy.

"There will be a dead man in this room!"

All at once she heard the cry of the hound, Nero, and the next moment she saw the white creature stop suddenly, for the dog was almost upon her. This, as the reader knows, was after the discovery of the tragedy in Lady Constance's bedchamber.

Before the White Woman could place herself in an attitude of defense, Nero, with a great leap, was at her side. A low cry of terror leaped from the woman's throat, and, setting herself firmly on the ground, for flight was impossible, she nerved herself for a struggle with the beast.

Breaking a dead limb from a tree, the White Woman flew at the dog with the energy of despair, and at last succeeded in beating him off, but not until he had torn her garment in his madness. Nero went toward the house, and his victim fell against the tree exhausted.

Selina longed to go to her assistance, but the weird story of the Diamond Mouse held her aloof. She watched her, until, recovering her spirits, the strange creature managed to right herself and made off toward the river. The octoroon followed, and saw her halt on the bank of the stream, her slender form revealed by the moonbeams. But for her desperate battle with the dog, Selina would have thought her a creature from the unseen world, but she knew that no spirit could resist the teeth of Nero as she had done.

If the White Woman had thought that she was on her way to the boathouse where she could obtain the services of old Jasper, she was mistaken, for she reached the stream some distance below it. Casting her eyes in both directions, she seemed to be seeking the ferry. Selina, protected by a tree, let no movement escape her.

All at once another figure came in sight, and the heart of the yellow girl leaped into her throat as she recognized Doctor Gurth. The White Woman let out a cry of astonishment, but the next moment the Black Doctor was at her side. Selina leaned forward with every sense on the alert.

"When did you come?" she heard Doctor Gurth exclaim, as he put out a hand from which the White Woman shrank.

"Am I your slave?" was the response.

"You know what you are. I thought I had left you at Graystone."

"So you did," answered the listener. "Must the bird remain in the cage till you open the door?"

Her coolness infuriated the Black Doctor. He took a sudden step toward the woman, but that moment she recoiled, and Selina saw something bright gleam in her uplifted hand.

"Come no nearer!" cried the White Woman. "Though I am in your toils, you see I am not defenseless."

Indeed she was not, for a vengeful hand clutched the knife, and a pair of eyes that seemed to emit sparks of fire scintillated beneath it.

"What have you done?" demanded the Black Doctor.

The woman laughed.

"Have you been to the manor? Have you spun some specious tale to the old woman there? Or what have you told the younger one?"

"It is not for you to know," cried the White Woman. "The bird is out of the cage, and she may try her wings, which you think you have clipped for good."

"But your dress?" and Doctor Gurth pointed to the rent made by the hound's teeth.

The White Woman cast a look of disdain upon her garment, and again turned to the dark face of the Black Doctor.

"Go home!" cried Doctor Gurth, and his hand pointed up the river. "The ferry is not here."

She did not put up the knife, but seemed to clutch it all the firmer, and the breathless Selina expected to see her launch herself upon the man who confronted her.

"Go back, I say!" repeated Doctor Gurth. "If I had known this, you would have found your pathway barred tonight."

The fall that moment of a branch loosened by the wind caused the White Woman to turn. The Black Doctor took instant advantage of the interference, and the next second threw himself forward, and before the woman could resist he had wrenched the blade from her hand and cast it away.

"Now, home!" he hissed, as he clutched her shoulder and whirled her in her tracks. "Thank your stars that I do nothing more than send you away."

Selina never forgot the look which these words drew from the woman's furious orbs. She was hurled from the Doctor's grasp like a stone from a catapult, she fell on her face among the damp leaves, but the following moment was on her feet, running away like a deer. Doctor Gurth watched her until she vanished, and then turned toward the manor. Selina did not know that he had been there that night, else her mind would have been filled with other thoughts.

With the Black Doctor out of sight, she took again after the White Woman.

She soon caught sight of the white dress, and saw it approach the river. The ferry was yet some distance away. What had become of Doctor Gurth, Selina did not know. She thought now of nothing but the woman in white.

All at once, on the very fringe of the water, the object which the yellow girl had seen uttered a sharp cry and sank down. Selina did not hesitate now, but ran forward and bent over the figure at her feet.

Now that the moonbeams fell full upon the White Woman's face, the slave girl saw that she was still beautiful, not so old as the Black Doctor, who was about forty, but still wearing the look of youth. The form seemed lifeless. Selina brushed the tangled hair from the wet face and gazed into the large brown eyes, which to her were filled with a light she had never seen in human orbs.

All at once those eyes got a human look. In an instant the White Woman was upon her feet, staring at the slave girl.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

Selina shrank from contact with the possessor of the voice. There was assault in the woman's tones.

"You have followed me? You are playing spy!" continued the White Woman. "You are in the Black Doctor's service?"

"Before Heaven, I am not!" iterated Selina. "I belong to Lady Constance."

"Then she has commissioned you to follow me!"

"I haven't been to Ravenswood for a day and a night."

"It is false! as false as perdition!" and then everything grew dark to the octoroon, for a hand had fastened at her throat like the talons of an eagle.

When she awoke she was lying on the ground, and the White Woman was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FACE OUTSIDE.

The wife of Doctor Gurth! To think of this was enough to send a current of fire through every vein of Sylvan Roche's body.

What! See Estelle the bride of this man of evil parts, for, although he, as yet, knew nothing of the Black Doctor's antecedents, he could not associate him with honest men. He had heard but little of him, and that little had not impressed him in his favor. Sylvan had met him but once before the fatal night, and that was some months previous, when he had crossed the river to treat Lady Constance for a slight indisposition.

Estelle had told him that Doctor Gurth lived in a large house known as Graystone, some distance beyond the stream; that he lived alone, surrounded by a pack of fox-hounds which he often raced with over the contiguous country, that he was a man said to be in league with evil spirits by the superstitious folk, and that no one was permitted to pass the threshold of his manor.

And it was to this man that Estelle had been given by the terms of her dead aunt's will, and he had told her in Sylvan's hearing that unless she became his wife, the curse of the Diamond Mouse would never be broken!

Sylvan did not associate the Black Doctor with the death of Lady Constance, and he was loath to belive that he was connected with the theft of the Mouse, but there was an air of mystery about these two occurrences which he could not penetrate. The presence of the White Woman, whom he and Estelle had seen by the oak during the storm, puzzled him, and doubly so when he was told the stories connected with the black ivory box.

Not content with perusing that clause in Lady Constance's will which gave Estelle to Doctor Gurth, he read the entire document. It left everything to Estelle, but there was a startling condition.

Her heirship was contingent upon her becoming the wife of the tenant of Graystone. If she failed to become the life partner of Doctor Gurth, she was not only to lose the broad acres and the old manor house, but she was to be saddled with Lady Constance's curse as well. It was to follow her through life, as the curse of the Diamond Mouse had followed its possessors. Nothing, went on this remarkable document, could break the spell of this ancient relic but the mating of the lovely Virginia girl and the mysterious Black Doctor.

Indignation burned in Sylvan's brain, as he read the will, with Estelle's white face almost touching his. He felt her breath on his cheek, and knew that she was watching him with eyes full of pity, if not hopelessness. When he had finished the reading he turned full upon her. Estelle averted her face.

"This is monstrous!" cried Sylvan. "I cannot believe that Aunt Constance ever penned this will of her own volition."

"It is there," was the slowly spoken answer. "It is in her handwriting."

"Strangely, mysteriously so," said Sylvan. "But there must have been some malign influences at work."

"I never knew anything to influence Aunt Constance."

The admission seemed to be wrenched from the depths of Estelle's being.

"And you, my dear?" He placed one hand on the girl's arm, and looked into the depths of her lustrous eyes. "Are you going to obey this infamous command of the dead?"

"The White Woman!" he exclaimed, and drew back into the shadows.

"I have told you, Sylvan, that I loved Aunt Constance, that I owe her my very existence at this moment. She was mother and friend to me when I was alone in the world."

"But she would not want to wreck your happiness. She knew of our love. She——"

"She must have known of it!" interrupted the girl, softly. "I did not conceal anything from her."

"Then," Sylvan's face grew white and his hands bruised the flesh of his palms, "then in the holy name of Heaven, why did she deliberately seek to blight all your future life?"

"The Diamond Mouse!"

"Pish!" cried Sylvan. "She was superstitious, Aunt Constance was. She could have cast that uncanny thing away, and brought sunlight where she had many a shadow. I shall go to the bottom of this piece of infamy. I shall get at the bottom of this mystery, even if it costs a life! I shall beard this Black Doctor in his den. I——"

"You do not know Doctor Gurth," interposed Estelle, as her face seemed to grow whiter. "Some strange tales are current about him. He is lord of the manor lands across the river. It is said that he deals in black magic——"

"Then this will is a specimen of his infamous arts!" interrupted Sylvan. "Think you, Estelle, that I am going to surrender you to this man of mystery and evil? The two deeds may be connected—the theft of the Diamond Mouse first, and the murder next. Find the White Woman, and we have one link in the chain."

"Aye, find her!" echoed Estelle with a hopeful start. "But how?"

"Leave that to me!" cried Sylvan. "The secret must lie in the domains of Doctor Gurth. I will invade his manor lands."

"And feel the hand of the Black Doctor?"

"It shall be hand aginst hand, cunning against cunning! If I fail, you can go to the altar with this man, but if I win——"

He caught her in his arms and strained her to his lips.

"I was on the eve of getting a clew from Halco," he continued, as he released her, "but he slipped through my fingers and vanished. The monstrosity must know something about the two mysteries of this night. Nero, the hound, caught the White Woman, and came home with a piece of her dress."

"He may have killed her, Sylvan."

"No, she escaped, for I found the scene of the attack and she was not there."

Estelle folded the strange will and returned it to the rosewood cabinet.

"I shall not sleep tonight," she said, turning her eyes upon Sylvan, who was intently watching her.

"Nor shall I," he exclaimed. "I wish I could not sleep again until we have solved this mystery and saved you from the wiles of the Black Doctor."

He kissed her on the forehead, and saw her move slowly from the library, and heard the patter of her feet on the stair. He did not leave the room until the old house grew as silent as the upper chamber which held the murdered dead.

"Why not?" said he to himself, as he at last crossed the carpet and opened the door.

In another moment he was going up the stairs. On the upper floor he groped his way to the death chamber, and noiselessly pulled the unlocked door ajar.

The candle which he had seen there upon his last visit was still diffusing its light through the room. He saw the drawn curtains which shut from his gaze the inanimate form which he knew was behind them. Sylvan closed the door softly behind him. As is natural in presence of the dead, he tiptoed across the room and drew one of the curtains aside. Reaching out after the light he carried it forward and held it over Lady Constance's face.

A wild thought surged through his brain. If the dead could speak, would she not revoke the clause of the will which gave Estelle to the Black Doctor of Graystone? Would not those ashen lips recite a story of fear, of evil influence, by Doctor Gurth, and bid him (Sylvan) resist the carrying out of that bit of infamy with his very life?

Perhaps she could solve the mystery of her terrible taking off if she could speak. She must have seen her murderer, she must have looked into his face whilst his hands choked out her life. He almost anathematized the dead lying before him for her silence, which would blight two lives and give victory to the man beyond the river.

Sylvan put down the light, and turned toward the one window, which looked out upon the world over the sloping roof of the vine-clad porch. There was something against the panes which was not the dark green leaves of the creeper. Sylvan saw this at a single glance. He saw, pressed close to the glass, a pair of eyes which had a look hardly human, two blazing, maddened orbs, such as he had seen in a menagerie when the tiger crouches against the bars of his cage and glares with all the rage of the jungle king at the faces that watch him.

It took but a flash to land Estelle's lover at the window. The face vanished as he reached the spot. He caught madly at the sash, and, though it was fastened, he tore it loose and threw it upward.

Over the sill, recking nothing, went Sylvan with a bound. The vines caught at his feet, but he jerked loose. He saw something drop from the roof of the porch to the ground. In a half-second he had thrown himself from the roof and fallen upon the leaves below.

A dark object was flying from the scene. Sylvan darted after it with renewed energy. As it dodged around a tree, he threw out his hand and clutched something. There was a cry hardly human, a quick wrench, and a spring, and Sylvan held in his hand not the flesh and blood of his quarry, but a queer-looking head covering, at which he stared with his eyes half-paralyzed in their sockets.

"Estelle may know this," he muttered, still staring at his trophy. "But I believe the face at the window was Halco's."

CHAPTER VII.

GRAYSTONE.

Doctor Saltus Gurth was alone in his private chamber at Graystone.

This strange looking octagonal house had been a mystery to the neighborhood ever since it rose from its foundations and lifted its observatory above the tops of the trees by which it was surrounded. The Black Doctor was not the builder, but coming into the country some time previous to the opening of our story, he had found it on the market and had purchased it of the first owner's heirs. It was then known as Bishop's Folly, but when he took possession he changed the name to Graystone, a name which it had borne ever since.

Few people had ever crossed the threshold of this place. The manner of its occupant deterred investigation, and the strange man was a law unto himself and had no acquaintances. His medical skill, however, was such that he became the healer of nearly every kind of disease, although his patients were wont to ascribe much of his success to black art, in which the neighborhood called him an adept.

He was supposed to live alone, with the exception of an old servant whose geniality was as circumscribed as his master's, and Dragon, as this servitor was called, was as much a puzzle as the Doctor himself.

It was the night after the startling events at Ravenswood when the Black Doctor opened a door which led into his private room and took a seat at a table in the middle of the apartment. He took from an inner pocket a small black leather case, which he opened by touching an unseen spring. A small hypodermic syringe with a silver tip fell out in his hand. He next proceeded to fill the slender tube with an almost colorless liquid, which was contained in a greenish phial, after which he shook the instrument, which he replaced in the case. As he did so, Dragon opened the door, and protruded his unshapely head, which had two beady eyes that at once became fastened upon his master.

"A gentleman outside," he announced.

Doctor Gurth arose and went to a narrow window from which a view of the steps of the house could be observed.

"Admit him, Dragon," said he, and the servant withdrew.

In another moment the door opened again, and Sylvan Roche presented himself to the man of Graystone. A puzzling expression swept across the Doctor's darkish face.

"Be seated, Mr. Roche," said he. "I thought you would come."

Sylvan started a little. How did this man know? Or was he but guessing that the tragedy of Ravenswood would sooner or later bring them face to face? Sylvan after a brief study of the face at the table took the seat toward which the hand of the Black Doctor had waved him. A short silence followed.

"You have come to talk about the late occurrence at the manor?" began Doctor Gurth. "What is it you have to say?"

The very coolness of this man irritated Estelle's lover.

"You are right," said he, still regarding Doctor Gurth. "You know that Lady Constance has been murdered?"

"We'll admit that fact," was the reply. "To all appearances she died a violent death."

"She was strangled in her room," said Sylvan.

"And you, I presume, have constituted yourself the solver of this mystery?"

"I shall leave no stone unturned to bring the murderer to justice," Sylvan spoke with emphasis. "But it is not so much to talk of that as another matter which brings me here tonight."

Doctor Gurth fastened his gaze upon the young man and leaned back in his leathern chair.

Lady Constance left a will in which there is an astounding clause."

"You have seen the document?"

"I have read it in toto," replied Sylvan.

The shadow of a smile gathered at the corners of Doctor Gurth's thin lips.

"Under the terms of the clause to which I refer Miss Randolph is to become your wife."

"You have understood correctly, sir."

The young man swallowed hard. This was the most self-possessed individual with whom he had ever dealt.

What could he say to such cool and calculating words?

"Would you mind telling me, Doctor Gurth, what brought about this state of affairs? It is incomprehensible to me. I acknowledge openly, as you may already be informed, that I am Estelle's accepted suitor. We passed the stage of mere friendship months ago, and since then we have met on the plane of lover-hood."

He paused to note the effect of his declaration. The Doctor's countenance did not change, but was as imperturbable as ever.

"You may ask, certainly," said he. "It is within my province, however, to give

the desired information or to withhold it."

"If you withhold it," cried Sylvan, "I shall impute dishonest motives to you!"

The dark face seemed to grow darker still.

"Since you have come to me for information which you may be entitled to know," said the Black Doctor, carefully measuring his words, "I will say that Lady Constance Cheverly bestowed Miss Estelle's hand upon me for services rendered."

"And not through some malign influence which you had over her?"

The next moment the Black Doctor was towering over Sylvan like a shadow of fate.

"The door is yonder, sir!" he cried, in a voice which might have reached every corner of the octagonal house. "I have not invited you hither to discuss a matter which concerns me."

"But I am here!" exclaimed Sylvan, in defiant tones. "I shall not quit this place, though it is your castle, till you have made plain to me the arts which brought about this unwarranted disposal of Estelle's hand."

Perhaps he had gone too far. Bearding a lion in his den is not the safest thing in the world, and Sylvan realized this in the sweep of the Black Doctor's eye.

"There are two sides to this house," he said, angrily. "You will please take the outer one."

Sylvan left his chair and faced the man of mystery.

"Not until you have told the truth!" he cried. "Lady Constance was the possessor of the Diamond Mouse, which is now missing. It preceded her death at the hands of the unknown strangler. She believed in the legend connected with the black box. How it passed into her hands is not altogether known to me. But it is gone, and she lies dead in her chamber, unable to unravel the crime which took her off."

The young man wondered that Doctor Gurth heard him patiently to the end, for he saw the storm gathering darker upon the face before him.

"Do you dispute the authenticity of the will?" came slowly over the Black Doctor's lips. "Do you dare to tell me that it is not in the testator's own handwriting?"

"Estelle assures me that it is in Lady Constance's own hand," admitted Sylvan.

"Then, why all this drivel?" roared the Doctor. "I shall take under the terms of the will. Within two weeks Miss Randolph will become my wife!"

"The wife of the greatest charlatan that ever lived!"

Doctor Gurth put out a hand and touched a green cord that dangled over the table. Before he could manipulate it Sylvan sprang forward and seized his arm.

"You shall hear me!" he cried, looking squarely into the man's eyes. "I shall go to the bottom of this mystery. I shall find the White Woman and unravel the doings of yourself. Who are you? The neighborhood say you came here between two days, that you are a man of arts which would not be tolerated in other communities. You are playing a dark hand for the possession of one who shrinks at the mere mention of your name. You know that Estelle can never love you. You know that she would sooner see herself in rags than become mistress of this house. Your hand is somewhere in the events that have culminated at Ravenswood. I am your enemy, Doctor Gurth, ready to fight in the open, if you prefer such a combat, but secretly, if you will."

It took a powerful wrench on the Black Doctor's part to break from Sylvan's grasp. His hand shot toward the green cord, and the young man heard a bell tinkle beyond the room. Almost instantly the door flew open, and the hideous head of Dragon appeared. The body followed the head, and the servitor of Graystone awaited his master's commands.

"Seize that man!" thundered the Black Doctor, as he covered Sylvan with a quivering finger.

The servitor advanced. Sylvan saw that his long hands were itching to obey, and, stepping back, he drew a revolver.

"I have not entered this house of mystery defenseless!" he exclaimed. "If Cerberus takes another step toward me, there will be a dead man in this room, and it will not be the slave!"

Dragon cast a hasty glance at the Black Doctor and kept his station.

"Go, then?" cried Doctor Gurth. "If it is war, war let it be, open or by ambush! But let me swear, young man, that the terms of Lady Constance's will shall be carried out to the letter!"

That was all. Sylvan retreated toward the door. It stood open, and the next moment he had passed from Graystone.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONVICT 999.

Once beyond the threshold of the habitation of Doctor Gurth, Sylvan, with his face still aflame with rage, turned and looked back. The odd-shaped structure stood out against the stars like some giant's castle, and over it brooded that mystery which he had promised himself to fathom. His look was lingering and when he heard a slight noise overhead, he lifted his gaze and perceived that a window which opened upon an upper porch had been raised. The next moment something appeared on the veranda, and Sylvan's eyes almost bulged from his head when he found he was gazing at a figure clothed in white.

"The White Woman!" he exclaimed, and then he drew back into the nearest shadows and held his breath.

There remained little doubt of the identity of the person at whom he was staring. He had seen her in the glare of the lightning that fated night at Ravenswood, when, in company with Estelle, he had come across her by the gnarled oak. That this woman should inhabit Graystone with Doctor Gurth was no surprise to Sylvan. He was ready to charge that man with anything, and while he gazed at the apparition on the upper porch, he linked the theft of the Diamond Mouse with the murder of Lady Constance.

All at once the vision in white vanished, the sash fell with a hollow sound, and Sylvan turned away.

If he could have transported himself to the chamber behind the window, his astonishment would have been supreme. A door behind the White Woman had suddenly opened, and she turned to confront the Black Doctor. Saltus Gurth had entered with no intention of suppressing noise, for he had banged the door, and was now looking into the dark eyes of the White Woman with the mien of a lion.

"Give it to me?" he demanded, holding out a hand.

The woman shrank back with a half-suppressed cry on her lips.

"I will stand no defiance," he went on. "You have what I want, and I demand it."

She retreated across the room, still throwing into his eyes the flash of her own.

"Dare you disobey, woman?" he cried. "Give me the Diamond Mouse."

"Just as if I have it!" she laughed shrilly.

Doctor Gurth advanced a step. His hand, shooting out like a bolt, caught her by the shoulder and drew her forward.

"You will not?" he exclaimed.

She did not answer. By main strength he forced her against the nearest wall, and holding her there, took the little black case from his pocket and jerked out the contents.

"The needle! the needle!" almost shrieked the White Woman. "Is the devil never to become the man?"

"Never while I am opposed!" was the reply.

He drove the point of the hollow needle against her arm and held it there a second. With the face of a fiend he watched the workings of his instrument, and at length laid the unconscious creature upon the couch which occupied one corner of the room.

For a moment he gloated over his act, and then his hands went deftly through the woman's garments. His search was fruitless, and when he ceased he rose erect and gave her a look of impotent rage.

"She has concealed it somewhere," he said to himself. "She is like all her race, as cunning as the serpent. Who can have taken the Mouse but herself? She was on the grounds, she escaped for a purpose. She has played her mad act, but again she has baffled me."

He whirled on his heel and went away. There was a click of a lock behind him, and the sole occupant of the upper room of Graystone was the White Woman.

Downstairs tramped the irate Doctor. He burst into the library like a storm, jerked the green cord above the table, and glared at Dragon, who made his appearance.

"Is the man really gone?" he asked.

"Yes, master."

"You will watch the person upstairs. If she gets out, follow her."

Dragon smiled.

"That is all," continued Doctor Gurth. "But hold, Dragon!"

The servitor paused at the door and waited for further commands.

"I am going out," said the Black Doctor. "No one is to pass the threshold during my absence."

"Dragon will obey."

Five minutes later Doctor Gurth was on the narrow road which skirted the fringe of Graystone Manor. He was mounted on a wiry horse that carried him with ease, and his face was a study.

Half an hour afterward he drew rein in front of a modest house which was set back from the road and in the front window of which gleamed a light. He dismounted, threw the bridle over a post, and rapped at the door. It was opened by a clerical-looking man of sixty, whose face told that he was not expecting a visit from the man who had come. The Black Doctor entered the room before him, and found himself in a plainly furnished study which was a model of neatness. The dweller in the house waited for him to speak.

"I have called on a little private business," said the Doctor. "We are wholly alone?"

"Yes, we two are the only tenants of the house."

"I have come to tell you what the whole countryside will soon know. Lady Constance Cheverly of Ravenswood is dead."

There was a little start on the listener's part. His long hands which were clasped dropped suddenly apart.

"You will probably be called upon to preach her funeral sermon," resumed the Black Doctor, watching the minister closely. "I will see that you lose nothing by it. But that is not all, Mr. Basil. I shall soon call upon you to perform a wedding ceremony."

The minister's astonishment increased again.

"There may be some slight resistance on the part of the bride," and a sinister smile wreathed the Black Doctor's lips. "Doubtless you have experienced such little incidents in your ministerial career?"

The Reverend Harold Basil did not know what to say.

"It may be right for me to inform you that I am to be the bridegroom," continued Doctor Gurth.

"You, Doctor? And the bride——"

"Miss Estelle Randolph of Ravenswood!"

The silence that fell between the two men as the name dropped from the Black Doctor's tongue would have been disturbed by the fall of a pin.

"Miss Estelle?" echoed the minister. "I thought——"

He checked himself and allowed his voice to trail off into dead silence.

"One is permitted to think a great many things," smiled Doctor Gurth. "You will perform the ceremony, Mr. Basil?"

The country minister lowered his head.

"I seek the happiness of all mankind," he murmured. "Marriage is a sacred contract in which both parties are bound in love. It lasts till death doth part."

"That is all very nice," put in Doctor Gurth, with a toss of his head. "You will perform the ceremony when called upon."

"But you have just intimated that the lady might not be entirely willing."

The Black Doctor arose from his seat and came forward with his eyes fastened upon the Reverend Harold Basil like the orbs of the rattlesnake.

"You heard me!" he hissed. "You will perform the ceremony whether the lady is willing or not."

"But I protest——"

Doctor Gurth cut the sentence in twain by the sudden uplifting of his hand.

"You have protested before," he cried, his voice sinking almost to a whisper, though it rang through the room like a sentence of doom. "You protested when you stood at the bar for sentence, but it availed you nothing. When they put the prison stripes upon you, you protested again. Are you going through the rest of your life protesting? I believe you would protest were I to proclaim to the world that the Reverend Harold Basil of Shenandoah is Convict 999."

The face of the minister lost every vestige of color. He clung to the back of his chair for support.

"What are you? Man or fiend?" he cried.

"I am both!" laughed Doctor Gurth. "What will you do when I call upon you to perform the marriage ceremony?"

"You will not spare me this task?" wailed the white-faced minister.

"I will not!" was the merciless answer. "You are liable to be summoned at any moment for the ceremony. And if you fail me, Convict 999 will serve out the balance of his term!"

There was a low, despairing cry, which only the Black Doctor heard. The Reverend Harold Basil had fallen to the floor in a swoon, and with one look at him the man of Graystone turned away.

This dramatic story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. Read it. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Dog Philosophy.

They found Simon wandering around in the wildest part of the hills back of the summer resort across the lake. They knew he was Simon because it said so on his collar.

Simon was a puppy with the long meek ears and the apologetic eyes of the hound, but he was too small to be what he looked. A broken rope trailed from his neck.

It was the Daggett girl and the oldest Goodspeed boy who found Simon on one of their everlasting tramps in the woods. So they dragged him two miles to the boat and brought him over to their own side of the lake. They indignantly explained in answer to the accusing horror which greeted them and their prey that nobody could expect such a young and foolish dog to know enough to find its way back home and that they did not have the heart to leave Simon there to starve to death on wild gooseberries or be eaten alive by wild animals—mostly squirrels and hoot owls.

Simon, feeling the antagonism in the air, stood before them all and wept. Great tears rolled down his cheeks from his sad eyes and the Daggett girl wept in sympathy. She said that any one who could fail to be touched by Simon's hapless plight had a heart of stone and would be sorry some day. After which she brought Simon all her chicken from the hotel dinner and gave him the cream that her mother had in the ice box for breakfast.

The family found out about the cream when Simon nearly choked to death on a chicken bone. His choking broke up the bridge game on the Webbers' porch next door and Webber himself never forgave the Daggetts, because for the first time in his life he had been engineering a perfectly good grand slam and his opponents knocked most of the cards off the table when they sprung to their feet under the impression—so they claimed—that somebody was being strangled to death at the Daggetts'.

After this the Daggett girl and young Goodspeed led Simon away and the three of them sat on the bank of the lake and condoled with one another over the brutality of the world in general.

Simon mourned all night. When the neighborhood had gone sound asleep his grief became vocal instead of reproachfully silent. His voice matched the size of the hound he should have been had he been the hound that he looked to be.

The Daggett girl got up and put Simon on her best lingerie pillow and fed him chocolate creams at $1 a pound and called him pet names, but the minute she ceased her attentions Simon began his lamentations again. The Webbers next door made loud remarks on the subject of dogs and people who kept them, while the Periters, on the other side, shouted a demand that Simon be dosed with strychnine speedily. Daggett himself roared an order that Simon be put out of doors.

So the Daggett girl let him out and, being afraid he would run away and be lost again, remained on the front porch in filmy attire and she did not get over the resultant cold for weeks. Simon scared up a chipmunk and the chipmunk raced over the Periters' front yard, dashed into Johnnie Periter's tin pail, which rolled down into the croquet set and sounded like a bad imitation of stage thunder. Then he stumbled over a croquet wicket and sat down and yelped because he had hurt his paw.

The Daggett girl ran out and got Simon just in time to save him from an infuriated mob of cottagers armed with brooms and guns and hatchets. As Webber said in an impromptu speech in the moonlight, which lit up his lavender pajamas with a weird light, what did people come to a summer resort for if not to sleep?

The Daggett girl kept Simon in the front porch hammock the rest of the night and couldn't sleep a wink because the crickets chirped so. In the morning, while she dressed, Simon ate half a ball of her mother's crochet cotton and then spurned the scrambled eggs and chops that were presented to him. It was all the crochet cotton Mrs. Daggett had and her remarks made Simon weep afresh. He seemed totally beyond consolation and it made people nervous just to face his accusing countenance.

His grief was preposterous, for the Daggett girl and the Goodspeed young man gave up their whole time to petting him and being companions to him. If ever dog was pampered, Simon was that dog, yet he refused even to lick the tips of their fingers. He seemed devoid of gratitude.

"Do you suppose," the Daggett girl asked in injured tones, "he really has a grievance against us because we didn't leave him there in the woods to starve to death?"

It was just after she and young Goodspeed had offered Simon some creamed sweetbreads and a piece of frosted cake and he had regarded them brokenheartedly, and pumped up a few more tears that an awful-looking man got off the ferryboat and, spying the group, headed for them. He was a coarse person and when he arrived he kicked Simon in the ribs and growled, "Hey, you! Run away, would you?" and kicked him again.

Whereupon Simon jumped upon the coarse man with wild expressions of joy and had dog hysterics and kissed his red hands and jumped and danced and shook himself and wagged his tail brightly as though to say, "Hooray! I'm tickled to death to be found by my dear master again!"

He departed after the coarse man without even a backward look at the two who had been letting him roll in luxuries and tokens of affection for two days. When the coarse man yanked him on the boat by the scruff of his neck Simon positively shouted with happiness.

"Oh, what's the use?" said young Goodspeed in disgust. "Come on—let's go kick something!"

* * *

A Sympathetic Burglar.

"I woke up suddenly the other night and thought I heard a burglar in the room. I sat up in bed, and that awoke my wife."

"What did she do?"

"She accused me, as usual, of having a burglar bug. Said I'd never hear a burglar if I lived one thousand years. I said I'd bet I would. She said she'd bet I wouldn't and just then a shadowy form rose from behind the dresser and a hoarse voice exclaimed: 'He wins, madam.'"

"Did you catch him?"

"Catch him? I didn't try. I just lay there and laughed and heard him slam the door and run down the street. And say, my wife was so mad she didn't speak to me for a whole day. But I'll bet one thing."

"What is it?"

"I'll bet that burglar was a married man."

HER FIRST AND LAST WORD

Or, JANET'S CONSTANCY :-: By FLORRY J. BARRINGTON

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CHAPTER XI.

BROWNLOW invited Barney, as well as Mrs. Underwood and Janet, to see the motor races. He told himself that all he needed as an incentive to go to all lengths with Janet was to see that simpering ass of a McLane making eyes and saying fool things to the lovely lady of his choice, and to see her smiling back at him with a cordial politeness, not because she wanted to, but because she was too well-bred to hurt his feelings. Oh, yes, they would be a final goad!

On the morning of the races he reached the pier fully an hour before he expected his guests to arrive. Instead of going to the yacht club where his boat was kept, Brownlow walked to the next pier, where he had often hired an extra boat. The old man in charge picked out a natty motor craft with seating capacity for four.

Brownlow made terms and said he would try the boat before his friends arrived, and take it to the yacht club, as that was where he would find them. As he walked along the pier to step into the boat, he stooped down and picked up something from a box and put it in his pocket. The action was unnoticed by the old man, who was walking ahead.

As the little vessel chugged away a tall, athletic figure emerged from a hole in the wall which served Joel Bowers, the boatman, for an office. It was James Devonshire.

"Hello, Uncle Joel!" he cried. "I've been piping off your swell customer. As I don't care specially for him, I stayed under cover till he was gone."

"You don't know anything bad about him, do you?" inquired the old man, anxiously.

"No, and I don't know anything good about him," declared James. "Say, Uncle Joel"—all young people called Bowers "Uncle Joel"—"what do you keep in that square box out there?" he asked, carelessly, at the same time strolling in the direction of the box.

"Just a lot of junk, lad; nothing of any value," replied Bowers, following the young man.

"Would you miss anything if it was taken from here?" James asked, kicking the things over with his heel.

"Devil a bit," said old Joel. "I'm only surprised the junk men have left it here so long."

James said no more on the subject, but whistled under his breath.

"Of course, if you know the gent, you know he is a contestant in the first race," volunteered the old man. "But you're going to win," because the best boat has got the best man, and visee versee."

"I know that's your opinion, as well as your wish, Uncle Joel, and I thank you heartily," returned James.

"I wouldn't feel quite so positive," resumed Bowers, "if Brownlow was going to operate his own boat. He has one of the best built motors and knows more about the management of it than any one else. I don't believe there's a screw made that he doesn't know its value."

"Well, I must be off," said James a little later.

"Good luck," called Uncle Joel.

As James hurried in the direction of the boathouse used by his employer, a tall, overgrown lad met Joel Bowers on the pier. He was Uncle Joel's helper and he was called Jake. The boy went straight to the junk box and began to forage. Falling to find what he was searching for, he returned to Uncle Joel with a question on his lips.

CHAPTER XII.

A little later, Janet, with Barney and Mrs. Underwood, arrived at the pier in Barney's touring car. As Janet approached the clubhouse a messenger boy handed her a note. She turned aside, and with cheeks first rosy red and then deadly white, read the following lines:

"Dear Janet:—Naturally mother and father wanted to see me race, but they would be much embarrassed at meeting your fashionable friends. You will see a good deal of them on the water, but they will be glad if you refrain from noticing them in any way. I know you will please us all by doing this.

"Sincerely, JAMES."

Brownlow, coming out, received his guests. He saw the distress on the girl's face and smiled grimly. At the same time, James met his mother and father a block from the boathouse. He took Dick aside, and they talked gravely but hurriedly for several minutes. Then James turned to his mother.

"You'll see a good deal of Janet, mother," he said, trying to speak lightly. "If I were you I'd not notice her. She'll be hemmed in by a swell crowd, and it will be embarrassing for both."

Alice Devonshire looked sharply at her son. His words were cruelly to the point, she fancied. There was pained surprise on the kind face as she replied: "I've never embarrassed the dear child, James, and I never will."

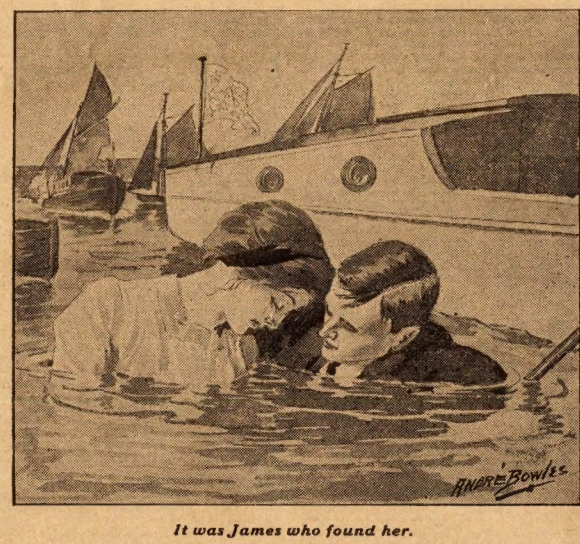
With a warning glance at Dick, James packed his admiring parents into a snug little naphtha launch, and they were soon mingling in the merry crowd of tiny vessels.

It was a gay scene that met James' eye, a moment later, when he appeared in his rubber motor racing suit. There were pleasure boats, large and small. The Jersey shore was alive with spectators. The river seemed to be throbbing with life and vigor, and the whole landscape was glorified to James because Janet was there.

The first race was to Poughkeepsie and return. Brownlow sat watch in hand. There was reason, his guests thought, for such tense excitement. He was a keen sportsman, and his boat was in the first race.

"Isn't it time for them to return?" asked Mrs. Underwood, interestedly.

"Twelve minutes yet," replied Brownlow, absently. He began to change the position of the boat, causing a nervous flutter among the restive craft.



It was James who found her.

"For Heaven's sake, Brownlow, why don't you stay in one place?" exclaimed Barney. "You've shifted around so much, to the terror of the occupants of the other boats, they'll ask us to leave the river."

"I'm trying to get away from that confounded launch," muttered Brownlow. "I've changed three times to see if the fellow was really watching me. He followed each time."

"Don't be so conceited, Mr. Brownlow," laughed Mrs. Underwood. "Perhaps he wants to look at Janet and me." She craned her neck to get a view of the launch.

Barney, whose back was toward the intruding boat, didn't exert himself to look back, merely saying, "I suppose it is some of the reporter chaps looking to see who's who."

Janet was silent. She had recognized Dick and his wife, and wondered why, if they wanted her to avoid them, they persistently followed her. Somehow she was not enjoying the day as much as she had expected to. She supposed that James' note had dampened her spirits. She tried to join in the conversation, but the words seemed to stick in her throat, and the smile died on her lips.

Barney and Mrs. Underwood were the only ones who appeared at ease, for Brownlow was moody and silent. He had, to the relief of every one, got his motor craft several hundred yards from the rest in a southerly direction. The nearest boat was now the persistent little launch hovering near.

Janet sat with her eyes glued in the direction of the returning boats. They were late. Had there been an accident, she wondered? Perhaps that accounted for the nameless fear and dread at her heart. She turned cold as death. When Brownlow espied them through his glass and said that they would be passing in a few minutes, a cry escaped her lips. At that moment Dick, from his constant vigil on the launch, saw Brownlow's motor-boat turn turtle. Before he had his coat off, the four occupants were floundering in the water.

So keenly was everybody watching the race, no one saw the accident for several moments. The woman were waving their handkerchiefs and the men were shouting. The power-boats became unmanageable, and the chugging and sobbing issuing from them drowned the cries for help.

The race was over. Brownlow had lost. James had won. But where was Janet? In an instant he saw the crowd gathering around the overturned boat. Two minutes brought him to the spot. Brownlow, who was like a fish in the water, was landing Mrs. Underwood in the nearest boat. Barney, with a score of other men, was swimming wildly in search of Janet. Alice stood in the little cabin launch frantically wringing her hands, her eyes forever following Dick.

"Oh, merciful Father in Heaven," she prayed. "Save her for my boy, for Thy own Son's sake!"

"She doesn't come up!" shouted one.

"How long has she been under?" asked another.

People stood with watches in their hands counting the seconds. It was James who found her at last, and amid ringing cheers brought her to the boat that hurried out to meet him. Not, however, before James had secretly removed a weight which was fastened to the girl's waist. It was a round affair, such as is used to check a restless horse that might run away during his owner's absence. James was able to unhook it as easily as it had been hooked, without attracting attention. He dropped it into the bottom of the boat.

In the extra that came out, a short time afterward, the report said that so far the efforts to revive the beautiful Janet McLane had failed, and the doctors were in despair of saving her life.

CHAPTER XIII.

"But my darling, don't you understand? I'm penniless."

"And I wouldn't care if you were coatless and hatless and shoeless. You've asked me to marry you and I've promised, and I shall keep my word, so there."

The speakers were Barney and Mrs. Underwood.

"But, my dear girl," stammered Barney, nervously, "when I asked you, I thought I had millions of money, not so much, to be sure, as I had up to a month or two ago, but things went against us, and I thought Brownlow had stopped in time, but it seems not. You see I don't know anything about big money investments, and I left everything to him, and it seems it's a case of the smartest finding his match sooner or later. Brownlow calls it misplaced confidence. But what's the difference what you call it. Some slick individual has got away with our combined fortunes."

"Never mind trying to explain, I shan't know any more when you get through," declared Mrs. Underwood. But let me say that I have plenty of money, and we won't discuss the subject further. Now kiss me, and don't be recalcitrant any more."

Without second bidding Barney took the charming widow in his arms.

"Have you told Janet?" panted Mrs.

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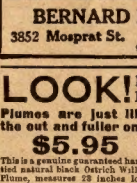

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Underwood, struggling from the bear-like hug.

"Indeed, yes," answered Barney, shamefacedly. "That was the worst of all."

"She feels the loss so keenly?" The widow's eyelids were raised ever so slightly.

Barney's eyes were downcast. "It wasn't so much the loss of money as loss of faith in me. You see, dear, she thought I was a superior sort of a fellow, and it is humiliating to think that I am an easy mark."

Mrs. Underwood stroked the easy mark affectionately. "Oh, that!" she said. "Well, you are superior, dear, and Janet has made a natural mistake in supposing that a man who is clever enough to make such a pile of money would be smart enough to take care of it."

Barney looked uneasily at his fiancee. "It's just this," he said, in self-condemnation. "If I had been as eager to study financial problems and manage my own affairs as I was to rush into pleasure and society, I wouldn't have made such a mess of it. Besides, I didn't make the money. I never was smart enough. I just stumbled on it."

Mrs. Underwood tried to sooth her disgruntled lover, but only made matters worse.

"Are you sure it's only poor judgment and not dishonesty?" she asked. "What does Brownlow say? How does he take it? Have you got competent people looking out for your interests?"

"That's a lot of questions, dearie," replied Barney, "and I can't answer one of them to my own satisfaction. You see Brownlow has had full swing. We have had no sympathies in common, except a mutual admiration for a certain lovely woman. But I always felt sure that he was above board. It took a long time to find my secretary, though I had several, and finally he came. I studied him closely, and at last took him into my confidence in regard to Janet. He undertook to find her and did. Ever since that time I've known that he had my personal interest at heart. At present he suspects some one of treachery but won't say who. He has a competent assistant, and they are like a couple of bloodhounds in my cause. In addition to that they have expert advice."

Barney paused and gazed affectionately at the rosy glow who was blushing furiously at his reference to Brownlow's admiration for herself.

"Confound it all!" Barney resumed impatiently. "I feel so humiliated, I don't deserve to have the dearest woman in the world to stand by me. I——"

But before he could say another word her hand was on his mouth.

"Not another word," she said, "or I'll think you want to get rid of me."

Then Barney started all over again to convince her that it wasn't so.

After the race and accident on the river, James called every day at the Fifth avenue mansion to inquire for Janet. When she was considered convalescent he discontinued his visits. Meanwhile the young man had talked earnestly with his father as to the best procedure to follow in his discovery of the attempt on Janet's life.

If it were true that Brownlow had deliberately planned the thing, the crime was so heinous that no mortal man could believe him. James' engineer had seen the weight, and was sworn to secrecy until James ordered him to speak. The boy Jake had identified the iron as one he had placed in the junk box the night before the race, and had missed on the following day.

Still Dick advised silence a little longer. He decided to renew a slight acquaintance with an old friend employed in Barney's office. He wanted to know more of Brownlow before speaking to Barney. As Janet was safe in her sickroom, James decided to follow his father's advice. The agony of mind in the next few days showed piteously on the poor fellow's face, and caused Alice, who had not been taken into the secret, to bitterly lament her inability to relieve his pain of mind.

All Janet remembered of the accident was that the moment she struck the water the soothing became so heavy from the weight of water that she was unable to attempt to swim and could only struggle vainly. She was better now. Almost past the convalescent stage. She was lovelier than ever, as she stood at the window and watched her father and Mrs. Underwood getting into the beautiful motor-car for a spin in the park. She stayed at the window, looking at the people below, and the carriages and automobiles of the wealthy. Soon her part in it would be over, and fashion would pass on its way beneath those same windows, watched by other eyes.

A taxicab blustered up to the door and some one jumped out quickly. Janet turned very white and sprang from the window. She waited breathlessly. The room was swinging, and there was a buzzing noise in her ears that had no connection with the roaring traffic below. It seemed an age since the cab had stopped. Was it possible the caller had only made inquiries and gone away? Could fate be so fractious?

The house was silent. There was no sound of footsteps on the carpets. Another moment and the door opened and closed. She saw James coming toward her in a mist that seemed to envelop everything except his face and clear, earnest eyes. She took his outstretched hand, and sat down thankful that she was so near a chair. She came fully out of the trance his appearance had thrown her into when he began to talk.

"It was a pleasant surprise to be allowed to see you," he began. "I was told that you are going away. I am so glad to see you for a few minutes before you leave."

Janet tried to talk of commonplaces, of the weather, Florida, where they had intended to go, and of a later plan to go to Europe. "Yes," she concluded, in lifeless tones, her pallor deepening every moment, "they thought it would be better to go abroad. Easier to let the disclosures come after our departure."

James looked at her vaguely, uncertain as to the meaning of her words.

"Of course," Janet resumed, in the same tired voice, "it's no reflection on father. We're not running a show. Every one knows the poor dear's defects."

It was clear that James had no inkling of the meaning of her words, but his whole attention was aroused.

"Running away?" he repeated.

"It sounds quite scandalous, but I suppose that's what they'll say. So you see what father's indifference has brought on."

"Indifference to what?" asked James, more mystified than ever.

"Why, money," she said. There was a curious quaver in her voice. "Don't you know that father has lost everything—that I'm as poor now as I was two years ago? Quite shocking, isn't it?"

James' face turned from white to red and back again to white, but he made no answer. Janet's lips quivered. It was not easy to say whether it was from tears or laughter.

"Of course, it sounds very bad," she said. "But I understand that no one is the loser except father, and certainly his loss must be somebody's gain. I thought you would give us that much credit."

James bent forward and grasped the loved hand.

"Janet," he cried, "is it true? Don't joke with me, for pity's sake!"

Janet's self-control broke down. She threw herself into the arms outstretched to receive her.

"It's quite true!" she gasped.

"And your father's loss is my gain," James murmured.

"And mine," sighed Janet contentedly.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was the night before the McLanes were to sail for Europe. Barney had invited a few friends to spend a part of the evening. They were a curious gathering. Brownlow arrived shortly after Mrs. Underwood, and was received as nearly as Barney could possibly make it, in his usual manner.

Janet was present for the first time since her accident on the river, and Brownlow was relieved to see that there was no change in the girl's attitude toward him. She was timidly polite nothing more or less. Mrs. Underwood was sparklingly witty, covering any constraint that might otherwise have been visible.

Barney was feverishly expectant. He could not have told why. His feelings were more presentiment than reality. He had had no forewarning of the calamity that was about to fall on his house. Presently Alice Devonshire was announced. Barney received her with open arms. Janet kissed her affectionately. Brownlow bowed gingerly, and Mrs. Underwood, to the amazement of Brownlow, received her warmly and kindly.

"What a diplomat she would have made!" he thought. "Actually one would think she enjoys talking to that poor low-bred woman."

Mrs. Underwood suggested that they adjourn to the drawingroom. This they did, leaving the men alone. Then Brownlow turned blusteringly on his partner.

"Couldn't you have waited until you got back among your set, and not brought that woman here to meet Mrs. Underwood?" he asked hotly.

Barney looked up in surprise, though he welcomed the diversion.

"That woman is just as good as Mrs. Underwood," he said, very decidedly.

"To you who don't know the difference, perhaps," blurted Brownlow. "It's a shame to subject a lady to such usage. It's disgusting to see good nature and delicacy of feeling, and I object."

Barney was indignant. He could scarcely articulate. "You object!" he scoffed.

Brownlow remembering his pose as a gentleman, suppressed his rising anger. "I object," he said, coldly, "on the grounds that I hope some day before long to make the lady my wife."

Barney laughed mockingly. "You'll have to wait then until I'm dead," he said. "She has promised to marry me on our arrival in Italy. James Devonshire is to follow on the next boat, and we're going to have a double wedding." Barney was brutal now. He felt that Brownlow had shown his hand, and he didn't mince his words.

"While we're enjoying our honeymoon," he resumed, "you'll be down in South America in the same predicament I found you in, and looking for another easy mark like myself."

Brownlow looked as if he could mur-

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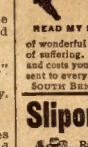

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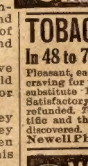

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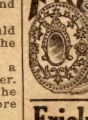

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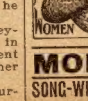

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der the speaker. He drew himself up with as much dignity as he could command in his furious anger.

"That was only a temporary embarrassment," he said, haughtily, at which Barney laughed uproariously.

Just then the door opened, and the rest of Barney's guests arrived. First came Dick and James. Close upon their heels was Miss Watts, accompanied by Cleaver. Then Brownlow recognized his confidential stenographer and a strange man who fixed his eye first on Brownlow and then on Barney, and then looked back again to Brownlow.

Both Barney and Brownlow thought they saw some more strange figures in the hall, but when the door was closed both felt they must be mistaken. Brownlow looked uncomfortable at sight of the visitors. Then he said in an undertone to Barney:

"Really, McLane, you can't expect me to help you entertain this promiscuous rabble. I'll say good-by and bon voyage."

Dick and the strange man stepped over to the door and intercepted his course.

"One moment, Mr. Brownlow," said the oily stranger. "We've just a little bit of business to transact before you leave us."

Brownlow turned a chalky white face to Barney.

"What is the meaning of this insufferable liberty?" he flurried.

Barney looked helplessly from one to the other. Cleaver and Miss Watts commenced to unroll papers. Then a wonderful thing happened. More millions of dollars changed hands in the next few moments and with less ceremony than had ever been heard of before.

Even Wall street would have sat up at the dispatch of the transaction. For Barney's friends had ample proof that the unknown, absconding embezzler was no other person than Brownlow. After Cleaver had made everything clear, the strange man stepped up to the traitor.

"You're my prisoner," he said, in an undertone. "Better not make a scene."

But Brownlow was in the mood to make very much of a scene. He began to protest violently that everything was legal, when James stepped up.

"Mr. Brownlow," he said, "I prefer another charge against you—attempt to drown Mr. McLane's daughter."

At these words Brownlow's bravado collapsed ignominiously. Barney had been kept in ignorance of these things, in case of failure. The poor fellow looked on in dumb grief at the bare treachery of the man he had trusted.

James threw open the door, and there entered one Jake, bearer of an iron weight which blanched every cheek when its use was explained. Close to Jake came James' engineer, the only occupant of the racing boat that received Janet when she was brought out of the water.

"There's a taxicab waiting outside," whispered the strange man in Brownlow's ear; and they started to leave the room.

Miss Watts stood before them. Brownlow stared, wondering what this wisp of scraggy womankind could have to say that would make any difference to him.

"In your years of solitude," she began, while the coward trembled, "I want you always to remember that I was the cause of your arrest. I was the bloodhound that tracked you. I stole into your office and found papers sufficient to prove your villainy. I terrorized your stenographer into helping me by threatening to have him arrested for conspiracy."

Still Brownlow stared, and everybody listened breathlessly.

"Twenty-five years ago my father, a successful salesman, was returning from a business trip abroad. Among the steerage passengers was an immigrant more dejected-looking than the rest, and my father took pity on him. He brought him to his house, clothed him, and got him started in his own firm. In return, the ingrate fleeced my father, robbed the firm, and cleverly implicated his benefactor.

"My father, unable to bear the shame, though perfectly innocent, committed suicide. I was only fifteen years old, but I took an oath to avenge his death."

A look of terror crept into Brownlow's face.

"Joe Brown, or Brownlow, as you prefer to be called, that oath has poisoned my life and made a hard woman of me. But please God, it is all over! I feel better already. I shall wipe you out of my memory from tonight. Your defeat is my victory."

She paused, and turning to Cleaver, slipped her hand in his arm. To the surprise of every one the sedate secretary stood it calmly. And Brownlow, led by the detective, left the room without a word.

Now the ladies were called, and explanations followed. Barney promised, with a break in his voice, that thereafter he would devote himself to business and the interests of every one present who had aided him in his helplessness.

James and Janet were speaking in undertones at the far end of the room. The young man's face was anxious.

"So I have to release you after all, dearest," he almost groaned.

Janet was too happy now to be easily cast down.

"Oh, no!" she protested. "I refuse to be released. You have asked me to be your wife, and here I am. If you try to get out of it, I'll sue you for breach of promise."

The look in his face was enough. There was no occasion for words. He led her through the heavy portieres into the room beyond, and drew her head upon his breast, where it rested willingly. And in their hearts Brownlow, separation, wealth, and Fifth avenue vanished like a dream. They were back in the cozy apartment surrounded by the ties that had bound them together.

Their separation had been excellent discipline. The early growth of their affections had been checked and pruned, chastened and purified into that love which is the crown and glory of life.

The Eno.

Busybody and Boy.

Curiosity and the patronizing disposition make a blend in a man that he often confidently believes a fine altruistic interest in his fellow creatures. But, however fine and altruistic he may think it himself, it is not likely to survive the sharp inspection of any one so quick-witted as the youngster of the city streets.

The urchin climbed up the car steps, wormed himself into a seat beside the Busybody, and with anxious care fixed between his feet the basket he was carrying.

"What have you in that basket, my boy?" asked his neighbor, bending over confidentially. "I notice how careful you are of it. It must be something quite valuable."

"You're right," said the boy. "It's something worth a whole heap."

"Well, won't you tell me what it is?"

"Not much! Think I want to get pinched?"

This was too much for Busybody; his curiosity, heretofore merely casual, grew suddenly acute.

"Well, sonny, I've a notion that if I give you a nickel you'll tell me what you have in that basket."

"Make it a dime," whispered the boy. "Only you've got to promise not to give me away to de cop."

"Why, of course."

The boy pocketed the coin.

"Well," he said, confidentially, "there's a kind of a baby in there. I hooked 'im and put 'im in there when there wasn't nobody lookin'. I'll get a reward for returnin' 'im."

"You young villain, do you mean to say you have a baby in that basket? Lying in that thing will kill it! Where did you get it?"

"I picked it up in front of one of the big stores. It was alone, so I just took it. Nobody'll miss it?"

"Do you mean to say its mother had deserted it?"

"Sure, its mother was nowhere round."

"How old is it?"

"Oh, a month or two months, I guess. Big enough to squeal—so I tied a rag round its mouth."

"Lift up that cover and let me see it!"

"Hol' on! You promised not to give me away."

"Yes, but I didn't expect——"

He lifted the cover eagerly and looked in. Curled up on an old cloth, and sleeping comfortably, was an insignificant-looking yellow puppy.

The boy jumped up grinning.

"Here's where I get off. Tanks for the dime. And say, I'll tell you one ten times as good for a quarter. Come and see me sometime at me house on Fift' avenoo? So long!"

Twain's Story.

Mark Twain once told the following story in the North American Review:

"Once I was received in private audience by an Emperor. Last week I was telling a jealous person about it, and I could see him wince under it, see it bite, see him suffer. I revealed the whole episode to him with considerable elaboration and nice attention to detail. When I was through he asked me what impressed me most. I said: 'His majesty's delicacy. They told me to be sure and back out from his presence and find the doorknob the best I could do; it was not allowable to face around. Now, the Emperor knew it would be a difficult ordeal for me, because of lack of practice; and so, when it was time to part, he turned, with exceeding delicacy, and pretended to fumble with things on his desk, so that I could get out in my own way without his seeing me.'

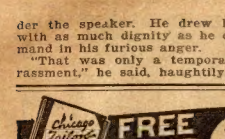
"He struggled along inwardly for quite a while; then he said, with the manner of a person who has to say something and hasn't anything relevant to say: 'You said he had a handful of special-brand cigars lying on the table?'

"'Yes; I never saw anything to match them.'

"I had him again.' He had to fumble around in his mind as much as another minute before he could play; then he said in as mean a way as I ever heard a person say anything: 'He could have been counting the cigars, you know.'"

Length of Time.

A student at Oberlin College one day asked the president "if he could not advantageously take a shorter course than that prescribed in the curriculum." "Oh, yes," was the reply; "that depends on what you want to make of yourself. When God wants to make an oak He takes a hundred years, but when He wants to make a squash He takes but six months."



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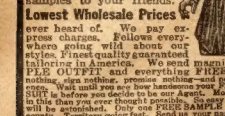

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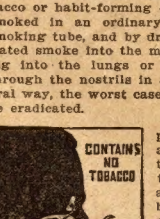

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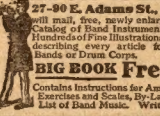

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IN POWDERMILL CAVE

By AUGUSTIN WILBER BREEDEN

THREE years ago last summer, Rob Hardy and I had a unique and rather unenviable experience in the Ozark Mountains of southwest Missouri. At that time Rob had a fresh B. S. after his name, from one of our big, optimistic Western universities, and was interested in practical mineralogy and especially desirous of proving to his shrewd, skeptical, self-made father that a college-trained man could be just as businesslike and just as practical as any other sort.

So when an "oldest inhabitant," whom we met on our fishing trip down the beautiful James Fork of the White River, told us about Powdermill Cave, and informed us that an old powdermaker, who had lived in the hollow near the cave during the troubled times just after the Civil War, had dug all his saltpeter there, Rob was as eager to explore that cave as a race horse ever was for the track. And when the old man added that the old powdermaker had said before he died that there was a fortune in the cave, meaning either that he had buried the money there that he had made in the powder business, or else the cave contained valuable deposits of saltpeter. I found myself as anxious as Rob to make the exploration.

At nine o'clock the next morning we reached the mouth of Powdermill Hollow, and, hiding our boat and camping outfit behind a screen of thick willows, made our way up the hollow to the cave. We found everything just as our informant had described it. The old man had told us that the cave blew out a cold breath night and day, and sure enough a breeze was coming from its mouth like that from the door of a cold storage plant. In the bed of a dry spring just below the mouth of the cave, Rob found an abundant evidence of the presence of saltpeter, and the entrance to the cave was scarped out like a miniature railroad tunnel where the old pioneer had dug the supply for his crude powder-making.

We made haste to bid farewell to daylight, and with our camp lantern as our sole luminary began the exploration. Just beyond where the old powdermaker had carried on his mining operations we had to begin to crawl, not on our hands and knees, but flat like snakes. The roof was so near the floor that our lantern could not be pushed forward upright, but had to be dragged. The long crawl was tiresome beyond belief. But finally, after what seemed like two hundred yards, but was only about fifty, we reached a place where we could sit up. Here set in a series of low-roofed, winding passages, which we examined one by one, marking the entrance of each with a leaf from my note book held down with a stone. They were all blind passages but one, and it led to a beautiful chamber, beyond which it was barred by a dark pool of water.

On the walls of this chamber former explorers had scratched their names, together with the dates of their explorations. One read: "Lem Gentry and Henry Hall, 1878." Another read: "Al Moore and Bob Stockstill, 1897—No treasure here."

"Fools' names, like their faces, are always seen in public places," I quoted, as we began to add our names to the collection.

"Yes, this is a very public place," replied Rob, laughing. "According to these dates there's been nobody in here for over ten years. But there's saltpeter here; the dirt of this floor is full of it, though hardly in paying quantities at this depth, I should say."

While Rob was talking he had been stripping off his clothes; and before I could realize what he intended to do, he was wading cautiously off into the dark pool. The water was icy cold, and its surface came up almost to the roof of the passage. It was probably these circumstances that had turned back all former explorers; but Rob, holding the lantern above his shoulder, began to wade straight across the pool. Soon I could see him wading about, flashing the bull's-eye of the lantern along the face of the opposite wall. Then suddenly the light disappeared completely, leaving the place totally black.

"Hello, Hardy! What's the matter?" I shouted.

I could hear a faint splashing, and then the light reappeared.

"Oh joy!" shouted Rob, "I've found the entrance to the inner shrine! Strip off your duds, Harry, and roll 'em up with mine, and bring 'em over!"

Five minutes later we two were laughing and shaking hands inside a narrow passage, to gain which we had had to wade neck-deep through icy water, with the roof only a few inches above our heads. Dressing excitedly, we began to explore the passage farther. It seemed to consist of a corridor into which, at some far prehistoric age, huge masses of stone had fallen from above. The only passages were narrow, tortuous crevices and around the sides or beneath the curve of these gigantic masses, next to the rocky floor on which they rested.

One of these crevices seemed to lead directly upward, and, taking the lantern, Rob wriggled his way up as a rabbit climbs a hollow tree. When I had about lost sight of the light, he shouted down: "Come up, if you can wriggle through! Come up and feast your eyes!"

In no time I had joined him, and we were once more congratulating each other and shouting with exultation. Above our heads stretched away great corridors, high-roofed, like the interior of a mighty cathedral.

Then suddenly the thing happened. Hardy stepped across the crevice by which he had come up, and as he did so the earth seemed to move under his feet. Like a cat he leaped to the solid ground where I was standing. For a moment we two stood looking at each other, dismayed at this uncanny thing; a part of the floor had somehow slipped or moved. A moment later we both made a dash to examine our exit. It was closed —absolutely closed.

At the instant I realized this I experienced a panic of terror. I had to grip my will as one would grip the hand of an enemy that held a knife to stab him. Rob had evidently been experiencing the same feeling. He looked straight into my eyes and said: "Harry, it won't do for either of us to lose his nerve. There's three or four other crevices here, and one of them may lead downward to the pool. But be careful how you trust your weight on anything along here; that rock had been standing there balanced for ten thousand years, and my sudden weight on it pushed it over."

But after what seemed an eternity of examining the other crevices, we were forced to give up all hope of deliverance in that direction. All this time I had been gripping that hand that was trying to stab me—fighting the demon, panic. Now I thought I would surely give way. Rob saw how it was with me, and turned sharply upon me.

"Look here, Harry! Don't you offer to lose your nerve!" he said harshly. Then he added in a matter-of-fact tone, and a little more gently: "There's almost sure to be some way out of here; but we'll never find it if we begin to act like babies—you know that, Harry, as well as I do!"

I felt utterly ashamed of myself in a moment. "I won't give up!" I said. "You can depend on me."

He suddenly thrust out his hand and we shook. I think the lips of both of us were quivering, but our hands were firm.

"Let's sit down and think; we must work on some kind of plan," said Rob. After a few moments he looked up. "Which way is it toward the hollow and which way back under the mountain?" he asked. "If we can decide that we may be able to dig our way out toward the top of the ground."

"Try your compass," said I, glad to be able to offer any kind of suggestion; "Powdermill Hollow runs north and south."

"Broken," answered Rob, simply: "I smashed it as I was coming up here. We'll simply have to make a map of our turnings as we came in here, and try to decide it in that way."

For a long time we sat puzzling over a map; agreeing, disagreeing as to this turn and that; finally giving it up altogether.

"We'll have to explore the ends of all these passages and see if we can climb up to the top somewhere that it isn't rock-roofed. If we can, we can get some sharp stalactites and get busy digging," said Rob, finally.

We started trotting along the three main corridors, scanning the wall and roof. The bigness and grandeur made the place seem awesome; the ceiling was so high in most places that we could not see it, except with the light from the bull's-eye of the lantern. Here and there we saw great black splotches—groups of bats clinging to the hard stone. From trotting we had taken unconsciously to running, until finally we dis-

He said there was a fortune in the cave.

covered that we were doing nothing but dashing wildly about from place to place, not stopping long enough to investigate anything.

"Here, this won't do!" panted Hardy, pulling up suddenly. "Let's stop and think it out. We've simply got to decide which one of these runways comes the nearest to leading out toward that hollow."

We both stood silent, breathing audibly. After how long a time I do not know, Hardy reached over and turned the light very low. I knew what the action meant—we would be in total darkness unless we found an exit within a few hours. It is needless to say that there was no more thinking or planning for me after that; I had all I could do to fight the panic that was threatening to overwhelm me.

"Wait!" cried Rob, at length. "Over in Kentucky there are sinkholes in the ground that open into caves below—and that wind that comes out of the mouth of this cave—the old man said it blew day and night—it must be sucked in from above somewhere."

"But where?" I cried, desperately.

"Listen, I have a plan!" he said, after a moment. "We'll take the globe off the lantern and hold it in each of these three passages. Whichever way the wind comes from is the way out."

We went eagerly about trying the experiment. At first there did not seem to be a breath of air stirring in the cave. We carried the lantern into a passage hung with beautiful crystal stalactites, making the corridor musical with their drippings, and looking like

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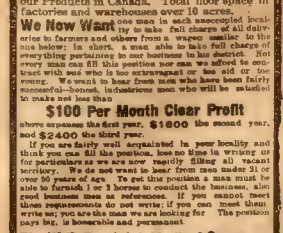

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great white icicles; but the flame never wavered. Then we took it far up into an opposite passage, and turning the flame so low that it sent up a thin black line of smoke, we had the joy of seeing the smoke deflected the least bit inward from the end of the passage.

We ran hastily up the long corridor, and scrambled up a sort of fall of dirt at the end. To our great joy and surprise the air here was warmer than it had been in any other part of the cave.

"It is the atmospheric air being sucked downward, probably through a "fault" in the rock filled with loose soil!" shouted Rob.

We hurried back to the other passage, and secured a couple of the sharpest stalactites there, and also got a drink from a pool that had formed below one of them.

"With water and grit, we'll dig out if it takes us a week!" said Rob, drawing in his breath, after a deep draught, and smiling for the first time since our imprisonment. I had a sickening feeling at that moment that Rob's brave smile was sadly premature; but I had by this time so much admiration for the cool-headed fellow that I would have followed him in anything.

For three hours we dug away, all along the top of the slope at the end of that passage; and everywhere our progress was stopped sooner or later by the solid limestone. At the end of that time we heard a murmur, soft, sweet, and steady, which grew, as we listened, until its volume filled the cave and grew and grew upon us, like the bass notes of a mighty organ in a cathedral, save that this noise was a hundred times more musical. Rob looked at his watch.

"It's the bats!" he shouted in my ear. "It's 6 o'clock and they're going out for the night!"

"Follow the bats! Follow the bats!" I shouted, seized with an inspiration that became instantly a mania. And catching up the lantern, I dashed down the long passage with Rob close at my heels.

In a moment we were in the thick of them. They were circling in thousands above the exit that our accident had closed. The tumult amongst them at this unexpected thing seemed to grow momentarily. Our light was blown out, and in a moment we were fairly smothered by their numbers. The noise had died down, however, before we got our lantern lighted again; and by its light we saw the last of them fluttering downward into the other and narrower crevices, which we had already examined and given up as too narrow.

We two walked disconsolately back toward the scene of our digging. We knew now that it was that or nothing, and we worked with desperate energy for the next two hours. Then our light went out. As it flickered and went out, Rob reached and caught my hand in the darkness.

"Let's lie down here on the dirt and rest a while," he said. "And if we can sleep a little, so much the better."

We tried it, but we didn't sleep—we didn't rest—it was harder work holding ourselves there than it was to dig in the darkness. So we dug, sometimes steadily and sometimes frantically. Sometimes we struck matches and tried to burn strips of our clothing for a light, but mostly we simply kept digging and panting in the darkness. And to make matters worse, we had no secure footing where we could stand and dig with any ease at the surface above our heads, but were constantly scrambling for a foothold. Later—it must have been toward morning, though we had no way of knowing, as Rob had foolishly let his watch run down—we lay down to rest again, and from sheer exhaustion I fell asleep.

I dreamed that the lantern was burning again, and that Rob was singing and shouting; and when I awoke I was ready to cry with vexation to find that it was not true. The only sound that I heard was the panting and digging as Rob worked away in the darkness. I joined him, and once more the nightmare of scrambling and digging began. Once we burned a part of my shirt, and by its light went and got a drink; and from time to time we burned portions of our clothing in order to examine the crevice we were gouging at or to build up the clay under our feet. Once I asked Rob what time it was; and he answered that he did not know, that his watch had stopped again while we were asleep.

How long this horror lasted I have no idea; but it suddenly came to an end. When we least expected it, there was a fall of dirt and stone from above that bruised us unmercifully and sent us rolling down the incline into the cave, and when we picked ourselves up and looked about us, there above our heads was a tiny gleam of blessed, pure white daylight. Rob looked up at it, gave a weak little shout, and fainted dead away; and I was a long half-hour in enlarging the hole and dragging him up to the ground, where he recovered and asked with a little sheepish laugh if he hadn't been "knocked out" for a little.

Where's Rob now? Why, he and his practical, self-made father are exploiting the richest saltpeter mine in the Mississippi Valley, with me as a silent partner. Three days after our terrible experience we two went back and explored that cave; a thing that we could now do with perfect ease and safety; and we found it to contain literally thousands of cubic yards of a substance sixty-five per cent pure saltpeter. But the strangest thing about the whole adventure is that we got a day behind with our count while in that cave, and never could account for it, unless we slept twenty-four hours during our nap.

A Mean Husband.

The meanest husband in England has just been discovered. A cottager was asked by his wife to dig the potatoes in the garden. He consented, and after digging for a few minutes went into the house, remarking that he had found a coin. He washed the dirt off, and it proved to be a half-crown. He put it in his pocket and went back to work. Presently he returned to the house, saying he had found another coin, which, on being cleansed, turned out to be a two-shilling piece. He put this in his pocket.

"I have worked pretty hard," said he to his wife; "I think I'll take a short nap."

When he awoke he found that his wife had dug the remainder of the potatoes, but she had found no coin. It at last dawned upon her that she had been fooled.

Useful Invention.

A Yorkshire farmer was paid by check for some cattle he had sold. It was the first time that it had ever happened.

"What's this?" he said.

"Why, money for the beasts," said the cattle dealer.

The farmer stared and had to be assured that if he took it to the bank they would give him gold for it.

"Well," said he, "A'll try, but if it's wrong 'un thou'll hear about it."

The check was cashed, of course, and the farmer went home happy, but he could not sleep. He had seen a wonderful thing, and it had excited him. As soon as day broke he made for the cattle dealer's house and woke the dealer.

"It's me," he said. "Where's tha got thim bits of paper from? Aw cud do wi' half a dozen myself!"

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Well Satisfied.

Bliffers—"Buncom is a self-made man, isn't he?"

Wiffers—"Yes. What made you think so?"

Bliffers—"He seems to be so well satisfied with the job."

Somebody Must Economize.

Mrs. Burgins—"Why do you insist upon wearing that old last season's straw hat?"

Mr. Burgins—"Principally because you have insisted upon buying three of this year's new ones."

Tom's Promise.

"You can't have any pie, Tommy. It wouldn't agree with you," said Tommy's mamma.

"But, mamma, I'd be polite," said Tom, "and agree with it."

Very Weak.

Bacon—"This paper says there is a spring in Nevada whose waters taste like chicken soup."

Egbert—"Well, I've often had chicken soup that tasted like spring water."

Farmer—"I thought as much o' that dog as of my wife."
Motorist—"Well, I'm sorry I killed him—how much do you value him at?"
Farmer—"Oh, about 50 cents."

One Convenience Lacking.

"We like the house; the price is all right and the location, as you say, is most desirable, but we've decided not to buy it after all."

"And why not?"

"There's no nickel theater in the neighborhood."

Excuse to Be Naughty.

Mamma—"Now be a good boy, Frank, and I'll take you out as soon as the rain stops."

Frank—"I'd rather be bad for a while."

Mamma (astonished)—"Why?"

Frank—"'Cause I don't think the rain is going to stop today."

Definitions.

The morphine habit—A shroud.
The ghost of a show—Hamlet's father.
A tight squeeze—Hugging a lamp-post.
Cold feet—Two feet of snow.
Natural selection—The best umbrella in the rack.
Weather report—A thunderclap.
Making up time—The three hours before the ball.
A receiving teller—A gossip.
A parting question—"Is that about right, sir?"
Facing fearful odds—Males in Massachusetts.
The result of eavesdropping—Icicles.
Fighting for deer life—The Adirondack hunter.

Was Acquainted in Court.

"And I suppose," said Miss Lushington, "that while in London you were at court."

"Only once," admitted Mrs. Lushington, blushing. "But I wasn't guilty and I got off with a reprimand."

He—"Do you believe in hypnotism?"
She—"I must. I feel that you are going to kiss me, and I am powerless to resist."

Two Ways of Writing.

Mrs. Bibbs—"I declare you men can't write a letter unless you have a regular desk, and office chair, and big blotting pad, and I don't know what all."

Mr. Bibbs—"Yes, and a woman may have a two-hundred-dollar writing desk, with everything to match, and yet she'll sit down on a stool and write on an old book."

Still a Chance to Sell Stock.

"The man who killed the goose that laid the golden egg was terribly foolish."

"Yes," replied Dustin Stax. "After he discovered his mistake he ought to have put the goose in cold storage and got out a mining prospectus."

A Profession for Him.

Fond Mother (of delicate dude)—"I think it is time Clarence selected a profession. What would you advise?"

Old Gent (reflectively)—"He might do nicely as a typewriter girl."

A Mistake.

"Was it your wife I heard calling you up this morning?"

"No; it was my wife you heard calling me down."

Clarice—"Did you really ask him for my hand?"
Clarence—"Yes; and it's a good thing I didn't ask him for both of 'em."

Mrs. Nukoin—"I'm just going to spend a fortune on Hortense's music."
Prof. Wiso—"Ah! madame, I'll write a composition for ze girl with nothing but bank notes in it."

A Shrewd Reply.

Clerk—"Perhaps, madam, you would like to look at some goods a little more expensive."

Customer—"No, not more expensive but of better quality."

Usual Condition.

Servant—"Please, sir, there's a man at the door with a bill."

Mr. Owens—"Tell him we are well supplied."

Unfeeling.

"I am wedded to my art," said the prima donna.

"Well," replied the hard-hearted manager, "if you couldn't treat a regular husband any better than you do your art, some man is lucky."

The Maiden's Hint.

He (bashfully)—"May I—er—kiss your hand, Miss Dolly?"

She—"Oh, I suppose so. But it would be so much easier for me to remove my veil than my gloves."

A Gentle Hint.

Uncle Jack—"What will you do when you get to be a man?"

Little Jack—"I'll give all the little boys I know a baseball."

A Tale of the South.

Thomas R. Shipp in a political speech told a story about a colored man he once encountered in front of a "busted" bank down South.

"What's the matter, uncle?" asked Shipp. "Did you have some money in that bank?"

"Every bit I had in the world, forty dollars," the colored man replied. "It makes me feel awful bad to lose it."

"You should take the matter calmly," said Shipp. "Did you never hear of a bank bursting before?"

"Yes," said the uncle, with emphasis. "But this one done busted right in mah face."

Conserving Leather.

Tommie was given a new pair of shoes and his father told him to be careful and not wear them out too soon. Two weeks later his father said to him:

"Tommie, I understand you have been at the foot of the class all week."

"Yes, father, I have. I could have gone to the head of the class several times, but I was afraid it might wear out my shoes walking so far."

Eileen—"I sang and the critics called me a sweet voiced violoncello."

Willie—"I said I could sing and the critics called me a lyre."

The Judicial Way.

"I don't see how a lawyer can enjoy a ball game under the present rules."

"What would a lawyer want?"

"I should think they'd want to stop the game after every decision and have it argued and ruled on, with a court of appeals sitting constantly on the side lines."

Very Trashy Verse.

Magazine Editor—"Yes, I printed one of your poems last month, but I don't want any more such trash."

Poet—"Trash!"

Magazine Editor—"Yes, trash; that's what it was. Why, I saw people reading it."

Cold Comfort.

Struggling Author—"This world will not recognize all I have done until after my death."

Friend (consolingly)—"Well, I wouldn't worry. You'll be beyond injury then."

A Paying Business.

First Westerner—"Wot yer doin' for a livin' now?"

Second Westerner—"Shootin' outlaws."

Hunter—"Gee! There's a bear and she looks hungry. That reminds me I'm hungry, too. I'm going back to camp and see what they have for dinner and I'm going to run, because it looks like rain."

She Wanted Him.

"Mr. Timmid has asked if he might call tonight. I think he wants to tell me that he loves me," said Miss Yerner.

"Oh," replied her sister, "that goes without saying."

"Yes, and I'm afraid that he will, too."

Advance in Art.

"So you think our national artistic sense is improving."

"Yes," replied the cruel critic. "Our statuary is far from what it should be. But we have at least taken the wooden Indians from in front of the cigar stores."

Boy—"How many fish did you catch yesterday?"
Fisherman—"Fifty-three."
Boy—"And did you eat all four of them?"

A True Sport.

"Why do you live with your husband, if you quarrel all the time?"

"Well, my sister bet me a box of chocolates we would never celebrate our paper wedding anniversary, and I'm going to win it just to spite her."

Home Melodrama.

"The cards are marked!" said the man.

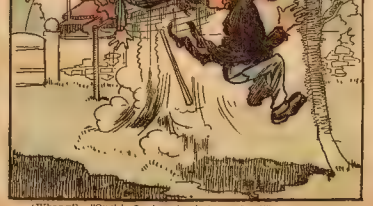
The woman cowered.

"The cards are marked!" he repeated. There was no tragedy, however. Seems the baby had gotten hold of a lead pencil and marked up the euchre deck.

LANDED HIGH AND DRY.

Farmer—"Hey! Stop, ye clothes thief!"

"Ha! Ha! I've got ye now alright!"



(Whang!)—"Ouch! Look out what yer doin'!"

"Consarn these spring steel clothes lines! Look at that hobo swipin' all our winter clothes!"

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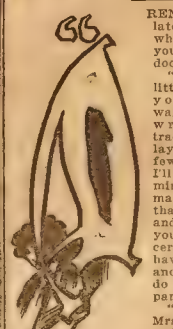


RENT you a trifle late?" asked the girl when she met the young man at the door.

"I believe I am a little," replied the young man. "A wagon of coal was wrecked on the track and that delayed my car for a few minutes. But I'll go home a few minutes earlier to make up for it. Is that a new gown—and that rose in your hair! You're certainly a dream! I have got to have another kiss. Whom do I hear in the parlor?"

"That's Mr. and Mrs. Cawsworthy and a niece of theirs and old Mrs. Dwine. I want you to meet them. Come in."

"Hold on a minute!"

"What's the matter?"

"It was a week ago tonight that I proposed to you and was accepted, wasn't it?"

"Yes, silly. Why?"

"And the next evening you had a family reunion when I called."

"Yes. Of course. I wanted you to meet all my relatives."

"Of course. And the next night when I called I found a bunch of your old school friends holding down the furniture. And I had to go home with a girl who lived out, as it seemed, a little way beyond the place where the sun sets."

"Well, I wanted you to meet my old friends. I don't see——"

"And the next night the minister of your church was here with his family. I explained to him in the course of the evening that I do not drink and do not gamble and that smoking is not really a habit with me, because I can quit any time I feel inclined."

"Well, of course, you understand, he, being a minister——"

"The following night I found some old friends of your mother's in the parlor and——"

"I don't see why you take that tone, I guess——"

"Wait. The next night it was the members of a club you used to belong to when——"

"Well, they were all nice young people."

"And last night it was Mr. and Mrs. Caraway and their son, who thinks he is a natural-born comedian. And tonight it is Mr. and Mrs. Cawsworthy and a niece and old Mrs. Dwine."

"I think you are perfectly horrid tonight! What do——"

"I just wanted to ask you if I might bring father over tomorrow night?"

"Of course you may! I just know I shall love him."

"And may I bring mother over the next night?"

"Why, certainly you may. The idea! I hope——"

"And my little brother the next night?"

"Of course, but——"

"And the members of our glee club the next night?"

"Ye-es, I suppose so. But what they've got to do with——"

"And a few old friends of our family the next night?"

"Certainly."

"And the nurse, who used to take care of me when I was a baby, the next night?"

"I shall not be at home that night, Mr. Templeman."

"How about the next night?"

"Nor that night, either."

"Then suppose we give a grand ball somewhere and invite all your acquaintances to look at me and all my acquaintances to look at you——"

"I shall do nothing of the kind. If you feel like that about meeting my friends I—perhaps we—you have made a mistake. I—you—are you coming into the parlor or not?"

"No."

"Very well! I——"

"I don't think I have time. I have got tickets to the theater. And I have got to coax a girl to go with me, and I am afraid I shall be late if I don't hurry."

"You should have telephoned your friend this afternoon."

"I tried to, but the telephone was busy."

"Well, I will excuse you. I hope you will have a pleasant time!"

"She is a little girl about your height and she has on a stunning gown and there is a rose in her hair. Oh, go in and make our excuses and come on. Be a good fellow! I haven't had an evening with you since we were engaged."

"You silly! Of course I'll go. But you've got to go in and entertain them while I get ready."

"How'll I entertain them?"

"Just put a rug over you and growl like a bear; that's the way you've been entertaining me."

"No, but honest——"

"Billy, if any callers ever happen to drop in here on your nights after this I shall give them slices of bread and butter and tell them to run home to their mothers. Stop! They'll hear you and you're spoiling my rose!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

* * *

Enough to Kill.

Doctor—"I see what the matter is. It's dyspepsia." All you have to do is to laugh heartily before and after each meal."

Mrs. Binks—"Impossible. I cook them myself, and wash the dishes."

* * *

Got Rid of Him.

De Smile—"Why don't you go to see the De Pinkie girls any more?"

De Bore—"They are too careless. They leave the front door unlocked, and I lose a new overcoat every time I go there."

A Good Bargain.

Sheridan, the celebrated playwright, who was no sportsman, having gone one day on a shooting excursion, everything flew before him and his gun, despite his effort to secure something for his bag. On his return home with an empty bag he saw a man, apparently a farmer, looking at a flock of ducks in a pool. "What will you take," said Sheridan, "for a shot at those ducks?" The man looked at him with astonishment. "Will half a crown do?" The man nodded and Sheridan gave him the half-crown, taking his shot at the ducks. About half a dozen fell dead. As he was preparing to bag them he said to the man: "I think on the whole I made a good bargain with you." "Why," said the man, "they're none o' mine."

GUARANTEED CAMERA
Takes pictures 1¾ x 1¾ complete on cardboard in 10 minutes. Never rots. A child can operate it. Camera and everything needed for taking pictures, sent prepaid for 58 Cents. Order Now. Pike Camera Co. Dept B South Norwalk, Conn.

Stylish French Lady & Cuddles

A DOLL SENSATION
FREE TO GIRLS
2 FINE DOLLS GIVEN AWAY

Prize No. 1 This French Doll is the handsomest dolly ever brought to the United States. She is dressed exquisitely and with the very best materials. She has Genuine Eyelashes 4-inch long, which makes her wonderfully beautiful. Her eyes close when she lies down. Her legs, arms, elbows and head are jointed in a natural manner, and they move in a wonderfully lifelike way. Dolly can be dressed and undressed as often as you wish, she is a big, fine large doll; nearly one-half yard tall.

A Real Life-Like Infant Doll

Prize No. 2 Cuddles, the real infant doll, is the newest, sweetest, realest little doll in toyland. See how real she looks, just like a real baby. She wears a rompers suit, which can be taken off and put on, just like your own little sister's. Arms, legs, etc., full jointed. The finest head, best doll you ever saw. Would last a lifetime. She won't break or crack. Squeeze her and she "squeals" like a real baby. How to get

BOTH DOLLS, YOUR VERY OWN

Send name and address and I will mail 12 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors, wrought together in the most grand manner. Distribute these premium pictures on a special 25-cent offer among the people you know. They cannot get these pictures at the art stores at any price. When you have distributed the 12 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $3.00. Send the $3.00 to me and I will immediately send you Free both of these beautiful dolls, also the following—

THE NEW DOLLY

DOLLY'S CLOTHES LINE

NEARLY HALF YARD TALL

Extra Present of Dolly's Clothes Line; a new and original toy, both amusing and instructive, consists of 20 feet of best cotton rope—2 galvanized pulleys and ¼ dozen clothes pins. This combination is given free with the 2 Dolls.

P. J. ALLEN, Sec'y. *649 West 43d Street* Dept. 539 *New York*

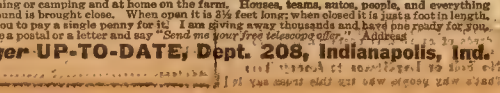
TOBACCO HABIT CONQUERED IN 3 DAYS

I offer a genuine, guaranteed remedy for tobacco or snuff habit, in 72 hours. It is mild, pleasant, strengthening. Overcomes that peculiar nervous craving for cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco or snuff. One man in 10 can use tobacco without apparent injury; to the other 9 it poisonous and seriously injures the health in several ways, causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, sleeplessness, gas, belching, gnawing, or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach, constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigor, red spots on skin, throat irritation, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, lung trouble, catarrh, melancholy, nervousness, impotency, loss of memory and will power, impure (poisoned) blood, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, neuritis, heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite, bad teeth, foul breath, emaciation, lassitude, lack of ambition, weakening and falling out of hair and many other disorders. It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to cure yourself of tobacco or snuff habit by sudden stopping—don't do it. The correct method is to **eliminate the nicotine poison** from the system, strengthen the weakened, irritated membranes and nerves and genitely overcome the craving. You can quit tobacco and enjoy yourself a thousand times better while doing it, if you want to, robust health. My FREE book tells all about the wonderful 5 days Method. Inexpensive, reliable. Also Secret Method for conquering habit in another without his knowledge. Full particulars including my book on Tobacco and Snuff Habits mailed in plain wrapper, free. Don't delay. Do it today. Send for it now. Stop using it you smoke or chew. Address:

SECRET FREE

EDWARD J. WOODS. 534 Sixth Av., X 356, New York, N.Y.

BOYS Would You Like To Have This FREE



3½ Feet Long
7 Mile Range

I want to give it to you to be your own to use and enjoy every day. You can use it while hunting, fishing or camping and at home on the farm. Houses, teams, autos, people, and everything for miles around is brought close. When open it is 3½ feet long; when closed it is just a foot in length. I don't ask you to pay a single penny for it! I am giving away thousands and have one ready for you. Just drop me a postal or a letter and say *"Send me your free telescope offer."* Address

***Manager* UP-TO-DATE, Dept. 208, Indianapolis, Ind.**

I Will Cure Your Catarrh

I want to prove to you absolutely the wonderful results of the new Luxor Treatment for catarrh. You will know and feel its effects the first few minutes. Nothing like it has ever been offered to catarrh sufferers. Contains no deadeners, opiates or injurious drugs; no bulbs to squeeze, no jellies to ram up your nose. Hawking, spitting, headaches, stopped up nose, head-colds, catarrh symptoms, bad colds and asthmatic catarrh simply vanish. You'll say the Luxor Treatment is really wonderful. Fourteen years catarrh has been cured by it in a few days. Send your name and address and I'll do the rest. **C. H. Curtis, Box 198-D, Chicago, Ill.** Just a postal card will do it.

RHEUMATISM

A Home Cure Given by One Who Had It.

In the spring of 1893 I was attacked by Muscular and Inflammatory Rheumatism. I suffered as only those who have it know, for over three years. I tried remedy after remedy, and doctor after doctor, but such relief as I received was only temporary. Finally, I found a remedy that cured me completely, and it has never returned. I have given it to a number who were terribly afflicted and even bedridden with Rheumatism, and it effected a cure in every case. I want every sufferer from any form of rheumatic trouble to try this marvelous healing power. Don't send a cent; simply mail your name and address and I will send it free to try. After you have used it and it has proven itself to be that long-looked-for means of curing your Rheumatism, you may send the price of it, one dollar, but, understand, I do not want your money unless you are perfectly satisfied to send it. Isn't that fair? Why suffer any longer when positive relief is thus offered you free? Don't delay. Write today. Mark H. Jackson, No. 118 Albambra Bldg., Syracuse, N. Y.

FREE SUIT

This well-known company makes this startling announcement: To advertise our high class made-to-order clothes, we will make you a fine suit to your measure and give you a chance to get it without one cent of cost. Act quick—before someone in your locality gets ahead of you. This suit will be the best you ever wore. Show it to your friends—tell them casually who made it.

We Mean Exactly What We Say

Be wide awake to this big smashing opportunity and send in your name at once. This wonderful offer is absolute on the square. We are a well and favorably known Chicago firm who's word is as good as a bond. If you don't know our reputation for honesty and square dealings, ask National Bank of Republic, Chicago.

We Send 70 Samples To Pick From

—also style charts, measurement blanks, tape, etc., without any obligation on your part—just as soon as we get your letter and full address. Remember, we're after business and want everybody to know about this. Send us a postal or letter and this small advertisement, to read it and to answer it are just the type of men we're after, to send to your home and address to-day—NOW.

SPENCER, MEAD CO., Dept. 156 Chicago

P. S.—We desire a few more live hustlers to earn $3 to $10 a day managing some of our agencies, open soon.

STEM SET WATCH AND COWBOY FOB FREE Made, time and The American stem set watch with beautiful engraved case, guaranteed five years, and this new Cowboy Watch Fob, given free for distributing 4 of our fine Art Pictures at 25c each, or chain instead of fob if you prefer. Send name and with cash and we will send pictures. Sell or collected and for your trouble will send Watch and Fob or chain. A great offer. Don't miss it.
M. O. SEITZ, 7A51 CHICAGO

4 RINGS GIVEN
Sell 10 packs Smith's Hair Tonic & Dandruff Remedy at 10c each. **WE TRUST YOU** When sold send money and we'll send 4 rings or chains from our premium list.
ROSEBUD PERFUME CO.
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NO HAIR, NO PAY
We grow hair on baldest heads. Only requires a short time to stop falling hair and cure any scalp disease. Enclose stamp. Particulars free. **E. R. JACKSON & CO., DEPT. F-1, KALAMAZOO, MICH.**

SAVE ½ ON JEWELRY
Buy direct from manufacturer. Save middleman's profit. Immense catalog Free. Send 10c to cover postage, packing, etc. **Special offer:** Genuine Arabian Diamond Stud or Pin (Retails at $1) sent with catalog Free. Chas. Conway Co., 112 Lowell Bldg. Chicago

EXTENSION BRACELET FREE
This handsome Gold Bracelet, set with sparkling Amethyst given for selling 20 New MOTTO PICTURES, 10c each. We trust you. Write for pictures.
C&M ART COMPANY
Dept. 49 Battle Creek, Mich.

WORDS & MUSIC of EVERYBODY'S DOIN IT 10c. Cramer Co., LaDore, Mo.

SONG-POEMS wanted. Cash or royalty to you. Needham Music House, 445 St. Louis Mo.

HUNTING TROUBLE.

She sang before the breakfast bell,
  She wept before the noon,
And so I have a tale to tell
  Of why she wept so soon.
All through her life she'd heard it said,
  "Sing ere the breakfast be,
Before the night you'll bow your head
  And weep in misery."

And so when she forgot and sang
  Before the breakfast time,
Within her head that adage rang
  Like some insistent rhyme;
She worried long about the woe,
  That unto her must fall;
She worried, worried, worried so,
  She had no peace at all.

Now just because she chanced to sing,
  Anticipation made
Her life that morn a fearful thing
  In abject guise arrayed.
A life that's formed of such poor stuff
  Is troublesome, I wot;
If you hunt trouble long enough,
  You'll find it where it's not.

* * *

Too Much.

A lawyer picked his way to the edge of the Subway excavation and called down for Michael Finnerty.

"Who's wantin' me?" inquired a large, rawbone voice.

"I am," said the lawyer. "Mr. Finnerty, did you come from Castlebar, County Mayo?"

"I did."

"And was your mother named Mary and your father named Owen?"

"They was."

"Then, Mr. Finnerty," said the lawyer, "it is my duty to inform you that your Aunt Kate has died in the old country, leaving you an estate of $20,000 in cash."

There was a pause and a commotion down below.

"Mr. Finnerty," called the lawyer, craning his neck over the trench, "are you coming?"

"In wan minute," said Mr. Finnerty. "I just stopped to lick the foreman!"

For six months Mr. Finnerty, in a high hat and with hard shoes on his feet, lived a life of elegant ease, trying to cure himself of a great thirst. Then he went back to his old job at one-seventy-five a day. It was there in the excavation that the lawyer found him the second time.

Mr. Finnerty," he said, "I've more news for you. It is your Uncle Terrance who's dead now in the old country; and he has left you another twenty thousand."

"I don't think I can take it," said Mr. Finnerty, leaning wearily on his pick, "I'm not as strong as I wance was, and I'm doubtin' if I could go through all that again and live!"

* * *

Learns Lesson.

It is a Shelbyville woman that knows how to bring an obstinate husband to time during housecleaning days. When Mr. Noname came home for lunch at noon he found the house furnishings in disarray, and his wife busy cleaning the rooms.

"Jason," said the wife, "please move the stove in the front room so I can take up the carpet."

"Haven't got time," replied Jason, as he hurried from the house.

"But I can't wait, and I want to finish the room this afternoon," retorted the wife.

"See about it when I return in the evening," and Jason hastened beyond hearing.

When he returned for supper he saw the carpet on a line in the yard, but there was a large round hole in the center. His wife had cut the carpet around the stove, which was left in the room with its feet resting on the circle of carpet. She had removed the tacks, and had lifted the carpet over the stove. Jason says it will cost $50 to buy a new carpet, and that hereafter when his wife asks for help he will not delay.

* * *

Convincing Proof.

Not long ago a convict in a French penal colony, who was serving a life sentence there, desired to marry one of the women convicts, and made application to the authorities for the necessary permission. The Governor of the colony offered no objection, but the priest proceeded to cross-examine the prisoner.

"Did you not marry in France?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And your wife is dead?"

"She is."

"Have you any document to show that she is dead?"

"No."

"Then I must decline to marry you. You must produce some proof that your wife is dead."

There was a pause, and the bride prospective looked at the would-be groom. Finally he said: "I can prove that my former wife is dead."

"How will you do so?"

"I was sent here for killing her."

The bride accepted him notwithstanding.

* * *

Helping the Cause.

"A drummer," said Medill McCormick, "was waiting at Nola Chucky for the Southern Gannonball Limited. The train crawled in at last, nine hours late—a ramshackle, clattering thing, as ridiculous as an old-fashioned high-wheeled bicycle.

"The drummer got aboard. There seemed to be only one other passenger. The locomotive hooted, the bell clanged, the wheels spun around, and steam hissed, but the train failed to move. Then there were more hoots, more puffs and hisses, and still the train didn't budge. Finally, after a third vain effort, the engineeer got down and shouted to the passengers, whose heads stuck anxiously out of their respective windows:

"'Say, I'll have to ask you two gents to climb off until I get her started.'"

* * *

The Parrot.

The ancient whaling bark Kathleen, while cruising off the West Indies, was struck by an infuriated harpooned whale and so great was the damage done that the vessel immediately began sinking fast. The captain's wife had barely time to get into a boat when the old bark went down. The sailors declare solemnly that the favorite parrot of the captain's wife, which she rescued, said plainly as he was being lowered over the side, "D——d hard luck; that's what I say."

* * *

The Fireman—"There were two men in the building playing checkers and one of them is in the ruins yet. We couldn't make him come out."

The Policeman—"How was that?"

The Fireman—"He said that it wasn't his move."

* * *

Hot-Headed Irish.

On the late Queen Victoria's return from her last visit to northern Italy, the Bishop of Winchester and the Dean of Windsor were dining with her, when she remarked to the former:

"You remember that before I started for Italy you urged me not to fail to visit the conventual church at Assisi. I bore this in mind, and was greatly impressed by all I saw there. I had one droll experience, too. For as I was being conducted through a very chilly corridor by one of the monks I said to him: 'Don't you feel the draughts very trying, wearing the tonsure as you do?' I received my answer not in Italian, but in these words: 'No, madam; I can't say that I suffer in that way at all. As you must be aware, we Irish are a rather hot-headed race.'"

CAREFUL DOCTOR

Prescribed Change of Food Instead of Drugs.

It takes considerable courage for a doctor to deliberately prescribe only food for a despairing patient, instead of resorting to the usual list of medicines.

There are some truly scientific physicians among the present generation who recognize and treat conditions as they are and should be treated, regardless of the value to their pockets. Here's an instance:

"Four years ago I was taken with severe gastritis and nothing would stay on my stomach, so that "I was on the verge of starvation.

"I heard of a doctor who had a summer cottage near me—a specialist from N. Y. —and as a last hope, sent for him.

"After he examined me carefully he advised me to try a small quantity of Grape-Nuts at first, then as my stomach became stronger to eat more.

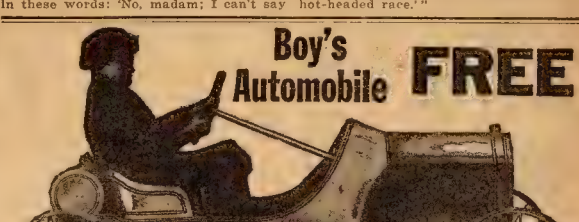
"I kept at it and gradually got so I could eat and digest three teaspoonfuls. Then I began to have color in my face, memory became clear, where before everything seemed a blank. My limbs got stronger and I could walk. So I steadily recovered.

"Now after a year on Grape-Nuts I weigh 153 lbs. My people were surprised at the way I grew fleshy and strong on this food." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

"There's a reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Boy's Automobile FREE



This is a real rubber tire vehicle—not a toy—and will hold a grown man's weight. The big racing hood is sheet steel, has slanting seat, giving driver real racing position; has real automobile steering wheel of wood and white metal. One Big Feature is the knuckle steering gear. The front wheels turn in response to the steering wheel, just as do the front wheels of a real automobile, the axle being stationary. This eliminates danger of upsetting on curves.

Remember—this machine is not a quadricycle or a mere toy or plaything. It is a real miniature race car; guaranteed to carry 250 pounds at a speed of from 10 to 12 miles an hour. Hundred of these vehicles in use all over the country. The boys go wild over them. Be the first in your town to have one. **The next thing to a gasoline car.** Every machine tried and tested before shipment. This automobile is geared up to go from 10 to 12 miles an hour and if you went faster even in a real automobile, you would be fined for exceeding the speed limit.

It is built for hard usage and nothing about it to get out of order. Will go over rough country roads as easily as the smoothest street or boulevard.

Every Live Boy will want one of these cars. More sport than anything else in the world and will not cost a cent to own one.

This Beautiful Car is yours absolutely free for just doing us a small favor in your locality that will take only a few hours of your time. **Send no Money,** just your name, and we will send you an assortment of our colored art pictures to be disposed of at 25 cents. Send us the money you collect and for your trouble we will send you this fine Boys' Automobile and guarantee safe delivery to your address. **Address M. O. SEITZ, Dept. B A 51, Chicago.**

TRY A FULL QUART GOOD OLD GREELEY AT OUR RISK

We want you to try a full quart bottle of our famous Good Old Greeley Whiskey entirely at our risk—we take all the chances. This is a whiskey you'll like above all others—our own private stock—a whiskey that has been thoroughly aged, is rich, ripe and mellow and has a most exquisite flavor. Send us your order—with this understanding: You to use one full quart bottle as a test—ask your friends to join you—and if you and they don't pronounce it the best whiskey you ever tasted, regardless of price—so pure, straight and wholesome, a lingering delight to the last drop. By selling direct to you—cutting out all intermediate profits—we have hammered the final price to the very lowest. It's your gain! Send your order today and get the **Free** Decanter filled with finest $6.00 gallon whiskey made. Make remittance to

GREELEY DISTILLING COMPANY, 104 GREELEY BLOCK, KANSAS CITY, MO

FREE

4 Full Quart Bottles Good Old Greeley Whiskey $2.90

8 Full Quart Bottles Good Old Greeley Whiskey $5.00

ALL EXPRESS CHARGES PREPAID

Free With every order of Good Old **Greeley Whiskey** we will give you, absolutely free, a beautiful scroll crystal glass decanter filled with Old **Greeley** 76 Brand, our best $6.00 gallon whiskey. Decanter is regular family size; a most attractive table or sideboard ornament.

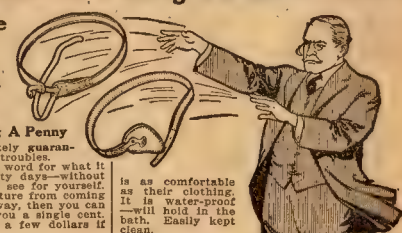
Remember, this free offer is just to introduce into new territory our famous Good Old **Greeley Whiskey.** We claim for it that better whiskey cannot be produced—so pure, straight and wholesome, a lingering delight to the last drop. By selling direct to you—cutting out all intermediate profits—we have hammered the final price to the very lowest. It's your gain! Send your order today and get the **Free** Decanter filled with finest $6.00 gallon whiskey made. Make remittance to

GREELEY DISTILLING COMPANY, 104 GREELEY BLOCK, KANSAS CITY, MO

An End to the Curse of Wearing Worthless Trusses

No More Rupture Troubles

60 Days Trial To Prove It



You Don't Have to Risk A Penny

Here is something absolutely **guaranteed** to overcome all rupture troubles.

You don't have to take our word for what it will do. You can try it sixty days—without having to risk a penny—and see for yourself.

If it doesn't keep your rupture from coming out or bothering you in any way, then you can return it and it won't cost you a single cent.

And it will cost you only a few dollars if you keep it.

The Only Thing Good Enough To Stand Such a Test

You know as well as we that you can't tell anything about a truss or anything else for rupture merely by trying it on. That's the worst of going to a drugstore or local truss fitter's.

Neither is it safe to judge by just a few days trial. A truss or so-called "appliance" may seem alright at first and afterwards prove utterly worthless.

But you can't make a mistake if you get something that will stand a sixty day test.

And our guaranteed rupture holder—the famous Cluthe Automatic Massaging Truss—is the only thing of any kind whatever for rupture that you can get on sixty days trial—the only thing **good** enough to **stand** such a long and thorough test.

Something Nothing Else Does

The Cluthe Automatic Massaging Truss is so utterly different from everything else for rupture that it has received **eighteen separate patents.**

It provides the **only way ever discovered** for overcoming the **weakness** which is the real **cause** of rupture.

Just how it does that—entirely automatically, without any attention whatever from you—is all explained in the free book.

Will Save You From Operation

The Cluthe Truss has so thoroughly proved its merits that physicians in all parts of the world and surgeons in the U. S. Army and Navy **now** recommend it instead of advising operation. It has brought complete cure in hundreds of cases after operation had proved a failure.

No Belt or Leg-Straps to Annoy You

That's why people who try this truss say it is as comfortable as their clothing. It is water-proof —will hold in the bath. Easily kept clean.

Free Book Tells All About It

Don't send any money—just write for our free book.

Full of facts never before put in print. Clothbound—96 pages—20 separate articles and 23 photographic illustrations. Will save you from being fooled and save you from wasting money.

Explains why elastic and spring trusses are a wicked crime—why they are the ruptured man's worst enemy—why the law should stop their sale.

Exposes the fakes and humbugs—shows how the so-called "appliances," "methods," "plasters," etc., are nothing but old-fashioned elastic trusses masquerading under false and misleading names.

Shows why operation is nearly always a needless gamble with death.

And it tells all about the Cluthe Automatic Massaging Truss and how you can try it sixty days on terms that make it impossible for you to lose a penny.

Gives endorsements of over 5,000 people.

Better write for the book to-day—it tells things you could never find out by going to doctors or druggstores. Simply use the coupon or say in a letter or postal "Send me the book."

THIS BRINGS IT

Box 25—CLUTHE COMPANY
125 East 23rd St., NEW YORK CITY

Send me your Free Book and 60 Day Trial Offer.

Name.....

Address.....

ANECDOTES OF PEOPLE

The Specialist.

The eminent specialist looked the patient over.

"Yes," he said, "what you need is a gradual gain in muscular tissues. Go at it slowly. Commence by lifting a ten-pound weight. Add to this from time to time until you can raise fifty pounds with comparative ease. Then come to me again."

The patient hesitated.

"I guess," he said, "you ain't gettin' me quite right."

The specialist frowned.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded.

The patient still hesitated.

"Why, you see," he said, "I'm the feller that carries th' trunks downstairs an' heaves 'em into th' transfer company's baggage wagon!"

Evidence.

A young wife was in tears, a few mornings ago, when her mother called. When asked what was the matter she replied that her husband was out late the night before and had been to a drinking party. "What makes you think he had been to a drinking party?" asked the mother. "He came home," sobbed the young wife, "wearing a phonograph horn for a hat."

Progressive Courtship.

"No, Annabel Green, I cannot marry you. My rich bachelor uncle declares he will cut me off with a nickel if I wed without his approval." And the young man with a weak chin sighed forlornly.

"Very well," replied the determined girl. "I will go to your uncle. What is his address?"

"Don't go, Annabel!" cried the youth. "It would only prejudice him still more against me."

"You mistake my meaning, Clarence Proons," said the girl. "If I can't marry you I will marry your uncle."

Reason Enough.

Lady (in touring car, beckoning to pedestrian)—"Will you kindly do me a small favor, sir?"

Pedestrian—"Certainly, madam."

Lady—"Then please stand out in the middle of the highway and let me see how quickly I can stop my car without hitting you. I'm afraid this brake is out of order."

The Language of Presents.

George—"What's wrong?"

Jack—"I can't make out what Miss Pinkie's little present to me means."

George—"If it's useful, it means that she is interested in your comfort, and would probably say 'yes.' If it's only ornamental, it means that the present is sent merely as a little token to a friend."

Jack—"The one she sent me is both useful and ornamental. It's a handsomely decorated individual saltcellar."

George—"That means that she considers you both useful and ornamental, but a little too fresh."

A Transposition.

"There is one thing I cannot understand," said the student of theology.

"What is that?" inquired the professor.

"Why Moses, the lawgiver, should be called the meekest of men, while Solomon, with hundreds of wives, was called the wisest."

Wrong Box Office.

Fuddy (at the phone)—"Hello! Can you let me have a box for four tonight? What's that? You only make 'em to hold one? Say, who is this speaking, anyhow? Eh!—the undertaker! Thunder! Ring off! I want the theater box office."

An Unjustifiable Suspicion.

The colonel had caught Rastus red-handed coming out of the hencoop with three fat pullets under his coat.

"So," he said, "I've caught you at last stealing my hens, have I?"

"What, me suh?" replied Rastus, in pained surprise. "Why, Marse Colonel, suh, Ah hain't a-stealin' no hens, suh."

"Then what are you doing with them under your coat?" demanded the colonel.

"Why, Marse Colonel, hit look to me so much like it war gwine to snow, suh, dat Ah went out to de coop to bring dem hens in by de kitchen fiah, suh, to keep 'em from gittin' froze, suh," said the old man, with a deep sigh to think that his honor had been suspected.

Naturally Surprised.

An old German furniture dealer had a woman customer who was a great talker. Nobody could get away from her when she started in. One day he sent a clerk to the lady's house to try to collect a bill. When the clerk returned empty-handed, the old German said:

"Vell! Vat did the lady say?"

"She did not say anything, sir. She was mute," replied the clerk.

"Vat!" exclaimed the surprised German; "vas she dead?"

Not Annoyed.

The man had opened a small factory in a residence neighborhood. He wanted to stand well with his neighbors, and after he had been there a few weeks he called on the nearest one.

"I hope my steam whistle doesn't annoy you."

"Hey?"

"I say I hope that my factory whistle doesn't disturb you. I suppose you have noticed the noise."

"Why, yes; I have noticed the noise," responded his neighbor. "But I'm a trifle deaf and I supposed it was the early robins."

How It Worked.

"I understand she married her husband to reform him."

"And she succeeded?"

"Yes; but after she had him reformed she wanted something to occupy her mind, so she became a suffragette."

"Well?"

"And that drove him to drink again?"

A Disappointed Porter.

On his recent trip to California, Bert Walker says the Pullman porter acted as though he wanted something from the passengers.

"What do you want?" Bert asked him.

"Oh, anything you see fit to give, boss," replied the porter.

"All right," said Bert. "Boys let's give the porter three cheers." And they did.

Condensation.

Editor—"How's the new society reporter? I told him to condense as much as possible."

Assistant—"He did. Here's his account of yesterday's afternoon tea: 'Mrs. Lovely poured, Mrs. Jabber roared, Mrs. Duller bored, Mrs. Rasping gored and Mrs. Embonpoint snored.'"

Of Course He Would.

"I am telling you the truth when I say that I was much happier when I was poor than I am now."

"Then why don't you let your millions go and be poor again?"

"Why, I should be miserable thinking of the people who got the money."

The Obliging Editor.

Friend—"What was the title of your poem?"

Poet—"'Oh, Give Me Back My Dreams.'"

Friend—"And what did the editor write to you?"

Poet—"Take 'em!"

Room for Doubt.

Experienced Servant—"Gentleman wants to see you, sir."

Mr. Richmann—"Who is he?"

Experienced Servant—"I couldn't find out, sir; but, judgin' by his clothes, he's either a beggar or a millionaire, sir."

Cutting Miss Sharp.

Peggy Playne—"In talking about the beauties at the ball the other night, Mr. Wilkins paid me quite a compliment."

Sarah Sharp—"That is very unlike Mr. Wilkins. I never heard before of his paying anything before it was due."

Away He Went.

"Madam, I'm traveling around the world on a wager. I have to make good time or I'll lose my bet."

"Well, I don't mind letting my bulldog pace you for a couple of miles. Here, Tige."

Internal Evidence.

Teacher—"Haven't you studied your arithmetic lesson?"

Scholar—"No'm. I didn't have no time to learn nothing but me grammar lesson."

Placing the Blame.

"'Only unmarried men wanted.' That's the third job Eliza's done me out of this morning."

For Mother's Sake.

Bella—"He said he would kiss me or die in the attempt?"

Della—"Well?"

Bella—"He has no life insurance, and I pitied his poor old mother."

Man May Come Along.

Thelma Smith, a little East Side girl, has heard a great deal about the danger of contracting disease from handling articles belonging to others. She has been taught that she must not use the brushes and combs of other members of the family.

On one occasion the little tot was found industriously lathering her face with her father's shaving brush. She was duly reprimanded and told that she should know better.

"What will I catch, mamma—whiskers?" inquired Thelma anxiously.

Helps Their Business.

First Footpad—"Wasn't Judge Bighead the man who sent you to the penitentiary?"

Second Footpad—"Yep."

First Footpad—"Then why are you so glad he's been given another term?"

Second Footpad—"He always gives good citizens th' full 'xtent o' th' law w'en they gits caught carrying concealed weapons."

All Full.

"Sistern and brederen," said an old darky in testimony meeting, "Ah jes' wants to git to Hebben and sque-e-eze down into one of dem back seats."

"Nar, nar, brudder," said a deacon who had just come in, "dem back seats been fulled up long 'go."—Judge.

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With 12 boxes of our famous WHITE CLOVERINE SALVE you sell for us at 25c per box. Big seller. No two pictures alike. Big cash commission if you prefer. Everyone buys after you show pictures. Agents make $3.00 daily. Send name and address at once—we send Cloverine and pictures by return mail. Write today.

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Especially imported Japanese Constitutional Nerve, Tissue and Body Builder. Guaranteed cure for that tired feeling, nervousness, stomach, liver and kidney disorders. Send $2.00 for full month's treatment or write full description of your case. Free advice on health and diet. Money refunded if not satisfactory. Toniko Medicine Company, Sole United States Agents, Laboratory B, Edri, Pa.

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Avoid Blends! Send us your order for Hayner BOTTLED-IN-BOND Whiskey

You KNOW it is good and pure—the Government's Green Stamp over the cork is your protection.

NO MATTER what others may promise—no matter how tempting their offers may seem—*see* if they offer *Bottled-in-Bond* whiskey—and remember—there is only one way you can be *sure* of getting pure, straight whiskey—and that is to *insist* on Bottled-in-Bond.

That's what we offer you—Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey—rich, pure and delicious—shipped in *sealed* case—Direct from Distillery—and all it costs you is $3.20 for FOUR full quarts—express charges paid.

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Note the price—only 80 cents a quart—delivered. Where else can you buy a Bottled-in-Bond whiskey of this magnificent quality at this price.

WE WANT you to TRY this whiskey on our guarantee you will find it all we claim—as fine as you ever tasted—and the best value you ever saw—or you may send it back at our expense—and we will return your money.

Remember—you take no chances. We take all the risk—and we stand all the expense if we fail to please you.

No letter is necessary—

Cut Out and use this Coupon and address our nearest office

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Enclosed find $3.20 for which send me FOUR full quart bottles of Hayner Private Stock Bottled-in-Bond Whiskey—express paid—as per your offer. It is understood that if this whiskey is not found as represented and satisfactory to me in every way, it may be returned at your expense—and my $3.20 is to be promptly refunded. G-30

Name _____

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Orders for Ariz., Cal., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N. Mex., Ore., Utah, Wash. or Wyo. must be on the basis of 4 quarts for $4.00 by Express Prepaid or 20 quarts for $15.20 by Freight Prepaid. G-N

THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY, Dept. G-30

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MA WENT SHOPPING.

Y MA, she's the funniest woman! I have to laugh every time I think of what she did las' Saturday!" The stenographer laughed as she dried her plump hands on the paper towel in the restroom.

"What's she been a-doin' now, Bertha?" asked the girl with the bangs.

"Well, las' Saturday Clara and I went home early from the office 'cause the boss was out of town. My ma she was upstairs darnin' stockin's. She had just washed her hair, an' it was hangin' down her back, an' she had on an old kimono of Clara's that looked as if it had come out of the ark.

"My ma just loves to have lots of company an' would get up in the middle of the night to entertain folks. So when the doorbell rang an' the Schulzes came a-walkin' in ma was just crazy 'cause she wasn't dressed to go downstairs an' have a talk with Mrs. Schulze an' the two girls.

"I told ma to do her hair up any old way an' slip on something an' come down, but ma she's pretty proud of doin' her hair up into more braids than a pickaninny, an' she says no, she can't get her hair done in time an' for me to tell the Schulzes that she ain't at home.

"So Clara and I went down an' entertained the Schulzes, an' one of the Schulze girls played some new ragtime stuff on the piano, an' we got to laughin' an' talkin' an' havin' a high old time.

"Ma said afterward that it was too much for her, a-settin' upstairs an' hearin' all the talkin' an' not bein' able to join in with the rest. She said she knew it 'ud take her forever and a day to get her hair done up and her dress on, so she decided that she'd put on her long coat over her kimona and do her hair up in a knot an' put her hat an' veil on to hide her hair, an' pretend she'd been shoppin' an' was just gettin' home. She took a look down the stairs an' thought she could sneak out without our seein' her, so she tiptoed down the stairs an' out the back door, an' beat it around the block.

"First thing I knew I heard somebody walk up on the front porch an', of course, I didn't know't was ma, so I ran out to see who was comin'. Here it was ma, with her arms full of bundles like she'd been buyin' the town out!

"She gave me the wink an' walked right into the parlor an' pretended she was awful surprised to see the Schulzes an' was plum beat out from shoppin' all day. I never knew before that ma was such an actor. She sure would make a hit in vodeville!

"Well, ma has played some pretty neat tricks on Clara an' me in her day, an' got away with 'em too, so I says to myself: 'Bertha Weiner, here's your chance to get even with ma.' Then I says: 'Say, ma, what kind of bargains did you get downtown today?'

"Ma took a tighter grip on her bundles an' you oughta heard the yarn she spun about the gingham she bought at fi' cents a yard and the shirt waists she got for ninety-eight cents an' the remnants she picked up for a song.

"She got the Schulzes so excited that they all wanted to pile downtown, but ma told 'em that all the best bargains had been bought a'ready.

"So I says: 'Ma, le's see your remnants. What kind did you get, now?'

"Ma looked daggers at me, an' I winks at Clara an' Clara she grabs one of the bundles an' begins unwrappin' it, an' ma she screams out to her to quit untyin' it. But Clara kep' right on an' I grabbed another of the bundles an' poor ma she pretty near went through the floor.

"When Clara gets her bundle untied, what do you suppose it was? An old wore-out hairbrush an' one of ma's old shoes! About that time I got the other bundle untied an' it was pa's old faded overalls that he wears when he's a-tinkerin' around the house!

"Well, ma saw it wasn't any use pretendin' any longer, so she had to admit that she couldn't stand to hear us all havin' such a good time, so she just tied up a few things to look like store packages and sneaked out around the block and come a-sailin' in like a regular bargain hunter.

"Mrs. Schulze an' the girls laughed fit to die an' Mrs. Schulze said: 'I knew somethin' wuz wrong all the time, 'cuz I could see your kimono a-hangin' down under your coat!'

"Well, ma said it was her treat, so she made the Schulzes stay to supper, an' we girls got supper while ma dressed. Just say 'shoppin' to ma now an' she'll throw somethin' at you. Gee, it was funny!"

"I think you're real mean to your ma," said the girl with the bangs. "You oughta 'preciate a ma that's so jolly, instead of pokin' fun at her all the time."

"Oh, snakes!" returned Bertha. "Ma don't care. She enjoys it. I don't know anybody that likes a good joke better'n my ma does!"

A First-Ranker.

"She plays a splendid game of bridge."

"That so?"

"Yes. I don't believe she's cost her husband a dollar this year."

Full of Bundles.

$1.00 Take $1.00
Your Pick

Look at these magnificent bargains. Positively the nobbiest up-to-date quality garments ever offered at anything like the price.

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1912 Fall Style Books Free You will find in this new book No. 28 now ready, all the leading styles and descriptions of the newest fashions by the best designers. Big bargain store shows so great a variety and such large assortments as you can find here. Add also for our catalogs of Men's & Misses' Boys' Clothes, No. 56. Full of big bargains.

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It is not an experimental distribution of medicine, such as have been made before that I am offering you. It is not a **sample of a medicine or a proof, or trial,** but a **bonafide ten-day treatment** that **has cured** a great many people and should cure you. And **it is absolutely free to you.** There is no money to pay. I even pay postage and all charges. **I just want to relieve thousands of sufferers** in return for the success that my thirty-two years of labor in the medical profession have brought me.

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Do you suffer so that your daily work is a torture instead of being a pleasure? Have you lost ambition, zest, enterprise, the desire to better yourself because of pains, aches, dullness?

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I can relieve your sufferings and I want to do it now. Write to me. Fill out the coupon and mail it to me. That is all you need to do. **I will do the rest and it will cost you absolutely nothing.**

No man tortured with uric acid complaints is fit for the battle of life. He cannot bring his brain nor his hands to work properly when his body is racked with pain. No woman can care for her home, bring up her children right or work if she is cross, miserable, distracted by suffering. The struggle is too keen, competition too merciless, the fight for success too strenuous to be handicapped by physical ills. To the man or woman who suffers I want to bring relief, comfort, happiness, success. Fill out the coupon attached here and mail to me. **Don't wait until tomorrow,** tomorrow never comes, **do it at once.** With my Ten-Day Treatment, I will also send my book on Uric Acid Diseases. It is a pamphlet full of the results of an experience of thirty-two years, during which I have specialized in uric acid complaints. It contains also a few of the tens of thousands of testimonial letters from preachers, lawyers, men and women of affairs the country over who have not hesitated to say just how much I have benefitted them

DR. G. B. ABBOTT.

P. S. Perhaps you have a friend who is a sufferer. Don't hesitate to have him or her fill out this coupon or write me a letter, or you do it for your friend. They will call you blessed.

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Have you pain in the back? .....Have you Rheumatism? .....

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Have you Catarrh?.....Your Age?.....Married or Single.....

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GENTLE JABS.

Vanity is the milliner's best salesman.

The man who maligns his home town injures himself.

A man minus a grouch of some kind misses a lot of fun.

The girl who really can sing is never anxious to show off.

All any man wants is justice—but he likes to be the judge.

Fast friends are all right, but be slow to trust those who are too fast.

Domestic troubles never bother a man who lets his wife have her own way.

It's a pity men can't get out of trouble as easily as they can get out of work.

It's the easiest thing in the world for a woman to fool a man who tries to fool her.

A woman will acknowledge gray hairs before she will the years that bring them.

Sometimes a woman's idea of economy is to buy an automobile in order to save car fare.

Many a farmer's boy learns to sow wild oats without going to an agricultural college.

When ministers and public officials are able to please everybody the millennium will be at hand.

With the waning of the honeymoon a man begins to look upon the kiss before-going-out as a daily task.

An accident policy would be more popular with some men if it insured against accidental marriage.

It's a safe bet that every woman who owns a princess gown honestly believes that she has a perfect figure.

A spinster thinks it's up to her to take a bachelor seriously—otherwise she may not get a chance to take him at all.

Nothing disconcerts a girl more than to brace herself to meet the shock of an unexpected kiss and the shock fails to show up.

A girl should never marry until she is fully competent to support a husband, and then she shouldn't marry that kind of a man.

During leap year a great many bachelors of mature years get married—probably because of the many young widows on the job.

No matter how good people are and how sure they are of going to Heaven, they are nearly always anxious to worry along on earth as long as they can.

It's easier for a mother to train up her son in the way he should go than it is for her to prevent him from going some other woman's way a few years later.

Wonderful Knowledge.

Dr. F. J. Campbell, a celebrated blind educator of England, once had an amusing experience at a rough-and-ready hotel in the backwoods of America. Two girls were at the dinner table with the doctor and one of them was touchingly sympathetic.

"Does your blindness make any difference to you when you eat?" she asked.

"Why, yes. Know when my food's good just as well as you do," said the doctor.

"And when you drink?"

"Why, it's just the same."

"And can you fall in love?"

"Dear me, why, of course I can. I have fallen very much in love."

"Well, but how can you see whether a girl's pretty? Do you mind telling me if I'm pretty?"

"Not in the slightest."

"Shall I put your hand on my face?"

"I know without that," said the man with closed eyes; "you are the prettiest girl on the creek."

"My! That's true!" exclaimed the girl as she rushed to her friend and asked: "Now how did he know that?"

Hazel—"Didn't Marion marry the druggist?"

Mai—"No. She followed his own advice and got some one just as good."

No Ill of the Dead.

The following story is told of a certain actor who was fat and scant of breath: He was a bad actor as well as a fat one, and the gallery guyed him a little while he went through his part in a military drama. He kept his temper fairly well until toward the close of the last act, when he had to be shot dead. His supposed corpse was stretched out on the stage, but did what no respectable corpse is expected to do—it panted. Said one irreverent galleryite to another on the opposite side of the house: "I say, Bill, look how his bellows blows." Thereupon the wrathful corpse sat up and, with angry looks, replied: "Respect the dead."

Concerning Women.

When Bishop Potter of New York was asked what he thought of women suffrage he made the diplomatic reply: "My dear madam, I have got away beyond that; I am trying to make the best terms with the sex that I can obtain." This brings to mind the saying of William M. Evarts, when asked by a lady if he did not think that woman was the best judge of woman. He replied: "Not only the best judge, madam, but the best executioner."

Whiskey Costs Only 12c. a Gallon.

A Kansas City Man Has Published a Book, Giving the Formula By Which the Whiskey Trust Makes Their $5 Per Gallon Whiskey For Only 12c. Per Gallon.

Fights the Whiskey Trust By Mailing His Book Containing Formula Free To Every One.

Mr. Marcel, located at 906 Marcel block, Kansas City, Mo., has published a book entitled "Secrets of the Whiskey Trust Exposed;" and "Why Is Marcel a Socialist;" in which he shows how the whiskey trust takes a bushel of corn, a pinch of barley malt, a penny's worth of yeast, and makes five gallons of whiskey at a total cost of less than 50c; and then sells it at from four to five dollars a gallon. He explains how the whiskey barons make their millions and shows who pays for their mansions and automobiles. The book is a fascinating story of a great crime against the consumers of whiskey.

Mr. Marcel is mailing out thousands of these books exposing the secrets of the whiskey trust on account of the Trust's fight against him. Any one interested should write for the book, as it will be sent free.

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Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 25 cents per word.

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STARK BRO'S, Louisiana, Mo., Big Idea in tree selling. Best terms known to nursery world. Box 80.

PERFECTION Pocket Adding Machine. Lightning seller. Agents wanted. Cincinnati Specialty Mfg. Co., Dep't M., Cincinnati, Ohio.

$250.00 paid for distributing 2,000 free packages Perfumed Soap Powder in your town. Men or women. No money required. B. W. Ward & Co., 1770 Berteau ave., Chicago.

$25 weekly taking orders for cutrate groceries. Outfit free. Progressive Table Supply Co., Toledo, Ohio.

WANTED—Agents to sell rich looking imported 36x68 rugs. $1 each. R. H. Carter, Milan, Tenn., sold 115 in four days. His profit $51. You can do as well. Write for sample offer and unique selling plan. Exclusive territory. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

FREE—"Investing For Profit" Magazine. Send me your name and I will mail you this magazine absolutely free. Before you invest a dollar anywhere get this magazine—it is worth $10 a copy to any man who intends to invest $5 or more per month. Tells you how $1,000 can grow into $22,000—how to judge different classes of investments, the real earning power of your money. This magazine six months free, if you write today. H. L. Barber, Publisher, 453, 28 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago.

MONEY by Mail. Start a mail order business, or manage an agency for me, printed matter furnished for half the profits. Write for particulars. Hazen A. Horton, Desk 701, Tekonsha, Mich.

AGENTS wanted to sell household specialties; big profits; fine sellers. Mississippi Sales Co., Potts Camp, Miss.

CAMPAIGN Hats—Felt Pennants—Novelties. Sell everywhere, dealers, consumers. Decorative Poster Co., Dep't 11, Cincinnati, Ohio.

WE WANT 100,000 live agents at once. Big profits and valuable prizes given to our representatives. We ship you all the goods you want on credit. Write at once for particulars. Give reference in first letter to save time. Address Credit "A", Box 3383, Boston, Mass.

KENTUCKY Distillery wants local representatives, exclusive or side line, to solicit the Saloon and Drug trade for Kentucky Whiskey, adopted by Government. Woodland Co., Warehouse No. 77, Covington, Ky.

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"Governor," said the Indian, "you got my money, my saddle, my blanket and my pony; now I bet you my squaw."

The Governor's expression at once became benevolent. "Capsue," he explained, "I cannot take your wife—the paleface does not indulge in double blessings of this variety; but if you will promise never to play poker again I will give you back your money and your property."

Capsue was delighted and always after that told the story to illustrate what a great man was Governor Nye.

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Our Boys' Corner

Boy Scout Adventures

Or, Lost in the Everglades

By St. George Rathborne

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Begun in No. 36, September 7. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE CAMPFIRE'S FLAME.

MEANWHILE what of Dolph? For some little time after his comrade left him, he was so busily employed finishing the getting of supper that he paid attention to nothing else. Then, having completed his arrangements, he began to notice it was growing dusk, and that Amos had not yet returned. Had there been a shot? Try as he might he could not remember having heard one.

Expecting that the other would drop in at any minute Dolph, feeling desperately hungry himself, boy fashion, poured out a cup of coffee, and helped himself to the canoeist's stew of shredded corned beef and succotash, which he had compounded after a fashion of his own. He sat there munching his supper and thinking. After a little while some noise off in the dense thickets caused him to start suddenly. Perhaps it was only a curious 'coon or 'possum prowling around, attracted by the delicious odor of cooking; but it served to remind Dolph of the strange fact connected with his cousin's continued absence.

Why, it was singular, sure enough. He began to experience an odd sensation down in the region of his heart. Could anything have happened to Amos? It seemed next door to ridiculous to imagine such a thing; and yet, though he made out to laugh, and call himself silly, the thing would not leave him.

He began to picture all sorts of weird accidents. Perhaps Amos had sunk in a treacherous quagmire, that had engulfed him so quickly he could not shout aloud for help. Or he might have met up with some hostile Indians who had captured him. Dolph could not quite get this idea out of his mind, even when his chum had made fun of it. And last of all, what if the hunter, wandering aimlessly about, had stepped on just such a monster snake as had greeted them at the time they arrived on the ridge? The very thought made him shiver, and look at the gathering darkness apprehensively.

By now his appetite seemed to have dwindled away until he did not care to take another bite. And it could be noticed that Dolph kept that shotgun close by his side as he sat there. It might turn out all right, and Amos come along after a bit; but all the same he did not fancy the prospect. What if he never saw his cousin again? How in the wide world would he ever be able to get out of this great labyrinth of water and sawgrass in that miserable little cranky canvas boat?

To his excited mind the jungle close by seemed peopled with all sorts of queer denizens. Strange noises came to his ears, too, sounds that resembled some human being in the throes of strangulation, it seemed. At another time Dolph would have recognized these as familiar noises, made by the small animals belonging to the semi-tropical region in which he was marooned. Now they added to his dismay, and gradually got upon his nerves.

Then came a blood-curdling whoop from the depths of the jungle. It was only the first call of the little Florida owl, as friendly a creature as one would want to know when studying Nature. But to Dolph it was the cry of some awful animal, which, having made way with his chum, now sought another victim.

"No use talking," he muttered, getting on his feet hastily, "I just can't stand this any longer. Something has got to be done!"

At first he even contemplated going off to look for Amos. Then the absurdity of such a course struck him. Why, as soon look for a needle in a haystack as to think of finding a missing boy in all that tangle! And then again, Dolph was forced to admit that he was not up in all the little arts and knacks of woodcraft such as Amos, for instance, delighted in.

"But I will be after this," he declared, positively; "I'm going to pitch right in and learn 'em all. I never realized how positively necessary they are when a fellow is lost. Oh! what was that?"

A crash had come from the darkness. Perhaps some climbing 'coon had missed his grip on a limb, and come to the ground with a thump. No doubt it was something quite as innocent; but it finished Dolph, all the same.

"The boat for me," he declared; "no matter what comes then; I've got a barricade in front of me."

He lost no time in carrying out his newborn idea, and clambered aboard, settling down with his face toward the shore. Then began a period of waiting and watching, while he kept his gun poked over the gunwale, ready for instant use in case of sudden necessity.

Minutes dragged along, and seemed hours to Dolph. Belonging to a troop of Boy Scouts in the heart of his native Southern city, he had not spent nearly so much time in the open as Amos, who belonged in a small town up in Michigan. Consequently, Dolph had taken more interest in photography, life saving, athletics, and such things, than in getting close to the heart of Nature.

Several times he thought he heard sounds somewhere, as though two persons might be conversing. This gave him new cause for anxiety. He, too, had been told that there were fugitives from justice hiding in the interior of Florida, where the cypress swamps offered facilities for eluding the bloodhounds of pursuing sheriffs. At the time he had scoffed at the idea as a fairy story, only repeated in order to test their courage. He now began to picture something along these lines, and to wonder with great awe if poor Amos could really have fallen into the hands of a bunch of unscrupulous men of this stamp.

The neglected fire burned low. Of course the coffee and stew must be stone cold by now, but that was a matter which caused him mighty little anxiety. Was that something moving over yonder. His heart thumped like the pulsations of a runaway engine, for as he stared the harder, he became convinced that he was actually looking upon some moving object!

A 'coon or a rabbit? It was far too big for either. Perhaps a bear had become bold enough to invade the camp! Dolph swallowed something that seemed to be sticking in his throat. At any rate, should it prove to be that, he must not show the white feather, for he had declared his intention of bagging game along that order if the occasion arose.

He kept his eyes riveted on the object. Yes, as sure as anything it seemed to be moving around from place to place. And could he believe his eyes, there was another of the same sort close by—two more, in fact!

Dolph's hair manifested a strange tendency to stand upright, which he had never known it to do before. His hand quivered, too, as he felt for the triggers of his double-barrel; but determined to control himself, he gritted his teeth and waited.

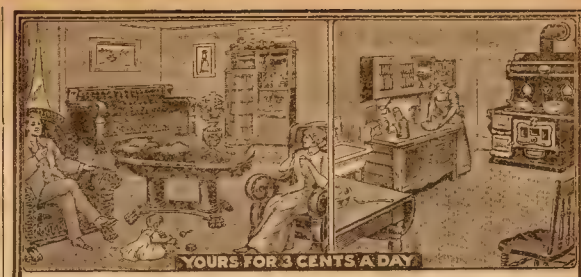
If the fire would only take a notion to flare up, so that he could make sure of his aim. He had always been told never to shoot except he was sure as to the character of the object that he meant to hit; and luckily enough this warning seemed to hold his hand now.

Why, the bear was making for the fire, which was surely a singular thing for Bruin to do! He held his breath while he watched the advancing dark bulk. Then it stopped and began nosing about close to the embers of the fireplace, as though looking for the kettle that held the savory stew. And as Dolph continued to stare, he saw the flames suddenly shoot up, just as if the prowling inquisitive bear had taken a stick and poked them, or tossed a handful of dry palmetto stalks on the smouldering heap.

"Oh!"

For the life of him Dolph could not hold back this exclamation. There was really good reason for his astonishment and alarm, for when the red flame so suddenly darted into new life it revealed that his supposed bear was a human being, and an Indian at that! But, at any rate, he was glad now that he had not fired. The Seminole did not look very ferocious, even to his excited imagination. Perhaps, after all, he might not be seeking to exterminate these foolhardy boys who had invaded his territory. He saw the Indian turn and make a movement with his arm, as though signaling the others to approach. And just as they did so the flame chose to die out again as suddenly as it had arisen.

Dolph bent his head forward, and stared harder than before. Surely one of those figures had a familiar look. If only there was a better chance to see! Could it possibly be Amos? The very thought gave him a new feeling. How



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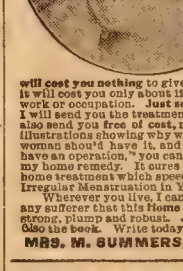

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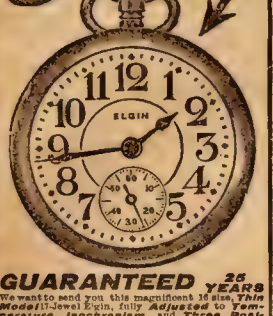

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could he tell? Was it advisable to call out? Would not such a course betray the fact of his being aboard the boat, and perhaps invite attack?

He thought of another way. Boy Scouts early learn to signal each other when in the woods, or in the dark. Often they can carry on quite a conversation through certain prearranged sounds, which would be utterly unintelligible to others. Of course, in their many talks, he and Amos had exchanged confidences concerning some of these secrets of their patrols, and he knew that his cousin would very likely recognize the bark of the swamp fox should he give it now.

So Dolph pursed up his lips and proceeded to imitate the bark of the sly denizen of the South Carolina swamps when calling his mate. He had practiced this until he had it down very fine; but never in all his life did he utter the quick bark with as much apprehension as right then. To his delight it was immediately answered from the shore. His suspicion then had been right, and it was Amos there, along with these Indians.

"Hello! there, Dolph! Are you aboard the Vixen?"

How welcome a sound were these words, spoken in the well-known voice of his cousin. Dolph hastened to answer; and at the same time showed himself above the gunwale of the helpless powerboat.

"Come ashore, Dolph. Lots to tell you. These are friends of mine, so don't be shooting them up, d'ye hear, old fellow!" laughed Amos.

Of course, after that, the other could not longer stay on board the boat, but jumping ashore was soon wringing the hand of his chum.

"Worried about me, eh, Dolph?" said the other in his usual cheery fashion. "Well, I don't wonder at it. I didn't mean to desert you, but was just drawn step by step deeper into this thing. You shall hear all about it right away."

"Shall I start up the fire again?" asked Dolph, eagerly.

"N—no, I don't believe it would be wise," answered his chum, slowly.

"But—your coffee is stone cold, and the supper ditto?" urged Dolph.

"I guess they'll have to remain so, then. A fire would bring those men down on us, and perhaps start trouble," returned Amos.

"Men—trouble, now, what do you mean?" demanded the astonished Dolph.

"I'll tell you soon. Give me a chance to swallow a little supper. Perhaps our friends here may be hungry, too," but upon being pressed the others refused to eat, Amos found that they did not wish to stay longer than was necessary.

"Have canoe not far away—can taken guns and girl—go home quick same. Tell my people 'bout bad man.—They chase away—want say good-by you all. Come to my village treat you good all same," the Seminole remarked, in his peculiar jerky way.

"All right," answered Amos, heartily. "Glad that I had a chance to help you. Look out for that man Hank, He is a bad one, and will find some way to get his girl unless you keep her under guard. Shake hands, both of you, with my chum. Good luck to you!"

And when the girl put her hand in that of Amos, she thanked him quite naively, he thought. She was only a halfbreed it was true, but could feel the common gratitude that one experiences toward a brave rescuer. Amos often wondered whatever became of her, and if the hardened father did finally get possession of his child. It would be a subject of considerable curiosity to him always.

When they had gone, of course Dolph plied him with questions, for he was almost consumed with eagerness to hear whatever could have happened to his chum during the time that had elapsed since his starting forth on that little hunt. So he had to be told, and the story aroused all his interest afresh.

"What if they manage to follow you here, Amos? Won't they give us trouble somehow?" he asked, at its conclusion.

"That might be," returned the other; "only they have no guns now, and we have. Besides, they may suspect there is a big camp of us close by, and take to the tall timber for safety. But I guess we'd better carry our stuff aboard the boat, and anchor off the shore. In the morning we'll leave here, bound north, and try to work around this stretch of land. Our destination lies toward the setting sun, and we mustn't let any little thing like this hold us back."

So both of them started in with a will to carry out the suggestion he had made; and which seemed to agree exactly with Dolph's idea of things.

CHAPTER VIII.
INTO THE WEST.

The power-boat was poled out some little distance from the shore and anchored.

"But they could easily swim out to us," observed Dolph, uneasily; for that he had heard about the ferocious Hank and his two companions had excited him not a little, as well as aroused his sense of caution.

"Yes, that is true," admitted the other, soberly, though in secret chuckling at this new trait in his cousin; for usually Dolph had shown precipitation and recklessness in much that he attempted.

"Duck stew!"

"And from what you tell me I reckon they're a tough crowd," the South Carolina boy proceeded.

"Sure they are. And I suppose it would be just as well for us to keep guard," admitted Amos, who knew that this was just what the other had in mind.

"That's my idea exactly. I'll take a couple of hours, then wake you, and we can fill out the night that way."

"Fine," assented Amos, dropping his head while he grinned; for he knew Dolph of old, and could give a guess as to how things would turn out.

Of course, as for himself, he had no idea that they would be bothered by the men. In the first place, Hank and his friends would not know where to look for them. Then again, the girl and the guns had gone toward the Seminole village; and if the men had nerve enough to remain in the vicinity at all, which Amos doubted, it must be in that quarter they would look for results.

But Amos allowed his cousin to perch himself in a lookout spot, where he could sweep the water between the boat and the shore with his piercing eagle eye.

"Wake we when that bright star drops out of sight behind the land, sure," he said, smothering his chuckle with an effort.

"I will, never fear," returned Dolph, bravely, as he gripped his own favorite repeating rifle, and snuggled down to watch.

So Amos crawled beneath his blankets. He had insisted upon Dolph wrapping something around him, for the tang of

(Continued on page twenty-two.)

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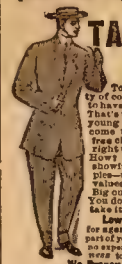

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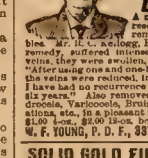

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And Here Are the Answers

YOU, Mr. American Voter, have a right to the *facts* before election.

You have a right to have settled in your mind every possible doubt.

For it is only by knowing the facts—and *all* the facts—that you can make up your mind to vote in a way that will protect *your* interests and the country's interests.

The Third Term Candidate and Professor Wilson, with their organizations, are leaving no stone unturned.

They are each holding out a beautiful Millennium for the American farmer and the wage-earner—if only the voters of America will bring about a change—a revolution—an upsetting of present conditions.

They are touching mighty lightly on the fact that conditions are pretty fine just as they are.

They want to "save the country." Nobody knows just what they want to "save" it from. But they want to save it anyhow.

And in all this pre-election fireworks, and high-sounding sentiment, they are bearing down not so much on what *they have* done—not on what they are able to do—

They are keeping up a running fire of questions for Mr. Taft to answer.

All right—Let's take up these questions—the ones that they hang their oratory upon.

Veto of the Democratic Wool Bill

Schedule K has been for years the storm center of tariff agitation. It is probably the most important schedule of the entire tariff. All students of the subject agree that it presents more difficulties than any other. We not only produce a large proportion of the raw material—wool—as an important feature of our farm and ranch operations in competition with flocks run on the cheaper lands of Australia, South America and South Africa, but our great woolen and worsted mills are erected, maintained and operated at much heavier cost than in Great Britain, Germany and other leading competing countries.

The only time this schedule has ever been radically revised—by the Democratic Wilson bill—the action was followed by a complete demoralization in American sheep husbandry, ruining thousands of our citizens who had their money invested in flocks; seriously reducing the domestic supplies of wool, and what is of even greater concern, now in these days of high-priced meats, reducing heavily the supply of lambs and mutton at all leading markets.

President Taft's first instruction to the Tariff Board was to conduct a searching inquiry into this complicated schedule. The problem was how to fairly protect the American farmer, and at the same time readjust the wool duties so as to enable the American manufacturer to meet the keen competition of foreign cloth-makers having access to free wool and operating under lower labor and works expense.

While this diligent inquiry was being conducted, with fairness towards all, the Democrats in Congress in their feverish haste to beat the President to a downward revision of an unpopular schedule, as a vote-getting proposition, and disregarding entirely the careful investigation being made, threw together a "wool-bill", based, not upon knowledge of the underlying facts, not upon any known principle of tariff making, but solely upon a desire to "smash the tariff." This was sent to the President while the agents of the Tariff Board were still busy in America, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Great Britain, France and Germany. Of course it was vetoed, as it richly deserved to be.

Then came the Tariff Board's remarkable report; conceded by leading authorities, not only at home but in Europe—where they do these things scientifically—to be the most illuminating document of the kind ever submitted to any government. Ignoring this completely, and hiring a "muck-raker" to do his best at "shooting it up", the Democrats reported their original "hurry-up" wool bill unchanged. The Republicans framed and offered as a substitute, a sweeping revision-downward bill based on the Board's report, correcting all the most vital faults of the old Schedule K in the light of thorough, nonpartisan investigation. The nondescript Underwood bill was nevertheless re-enacted, again put up to the President, who, of course, withheld his approval, set forth his reasons in a message which every lover of fair play should read, and appealed to the people for an honest judgment as to his action.

Who is therefore to blame for any failure to intelligently revise Schedule K? President Taft or his political pursuers?

About Canadian Reciprocity

This subject is the big bugaboo which both of the other parties are parading—with more than usual inconsistency.

It is now a dead issue.

We are all entitled to honest differences of opinion.

Many still believe that President Taft's attitude was wrong.

But let's think it over a bit, and see.

In the first place, Canadian Reciprocity was not originated by Taft.

It was handed down from the time of President McKinley. Roosevelt succeeded McKinley; he was strongly in favor of reciprocity.

He practically forced Congress into the act of Reciprocity with Cuba, and officially declared in favor of a Reciprocal Agreement with Canada.

President Taft went into the matter. He made his recommendation based upon a careful investigation of comparative conditions in the two countries.

And the fact that Canada quickly and decisively *refused Reciprocity* is a pretty sure sign that country believed that the United States would get a bigger share of the benefits.

And on this Reciprocity Point, how about the *other* candidates?

Mr. Roosevelt endorsed Canadian Reciprocity, not only during his administration in his messages, but in his published correspondence with Mr. Taft, in his speech at Grand Rapids, Mich., February 11, 1911, and in his speech delivered at the Lincoln Day dinner, at the Waldorf Astoria, New York, February 13, 1911.

And Wilson's election would simply mean abolishing all Tariff relations with Canada—giving the Canadians *every* advantage, and getting *nothing* in return. Think that over, please.

Now About the Republican Convention

More wild and weird stories were told about the seating of delegates—more absolutely false reports were circulated by the opposition press and orators—than ever before were thrust upon the public in reference to a political contest.

It was a cry of "fraud" to hide fraud.

The Third Termer's attitude was to claim everything in sight and out of sight.

In a nut-shell, here are the facts:

The total number of delegates summoned to the Republican National Convention of 1912, under its call, was 1,078, with 540 necessary to a choice. Mr. Taft had 561 votes on the first and only ballot, and was declared a nominee.

The contests brought by Roosevelt were unquestionably for the purpose of stampeding the Convention.

If he failed in this, he hoped at least to create an impression on the public that he had been robbed of his rights, and that these contested Taft delegates had no real right to their seats.

As a matter of fact it was Roosevelt and not Taft who attempted to usurp rights in this convention that did not belong to him.

The National Committee which passed on these contests was the same committee chosen in 1908 when Roosevelt was leader of the party.

The fact that the Roosevelt men abandoned 164 of their contests—without bringing them on the floor for Convention hearing,—was pretty sure proof that they had no grounds for winning their contention.

Besides as the matter stands, it makes a better Third Term Campaign story!

That these contests were made for effect only is best brought out by the following from the June 9, 1912 issue of the *Washington Times*, which is owned and published by Mr. Frank A. Munsey—an ardent Roosevelt supporter:

> "For psychological effect as a move in practical politics it was necessary for the Roosevelt people to start contests on those early Taft selections in order that a tabulation of delegate strength could be put out that would show Roosevelt holding a good hand. It was never expected that they would be taken very seriously. They served a useful purpose, and now the National Committee is deciding them in favor of Taft in most cases without real division."

It would be a strange rule of evidence which would require us to accept the testimony of a buccaneering psychologist who confesses to an attempt to purloin the larger portion of an honest man's property as conclusive evidence of the psychologist's title to the remainder of the honest man's possessions.

"The Truth About Those Delegates"—a little book which gives all facts and figures as to the seating of delegates, will be mailed on request by Republican National Committee, Times Building, New York.

About the Trusts

The Wilsonites will tell you Taft is a friend of the Trusts—a side-partner of monopolies.

No President has ever done so much to abolish monopolies as President Taft.

Others have talked about it—have threatened a complete destruction of illegal corporations.

But when you come to sum up what they have really done, it's a different matter.

Mr. Taft accomplished in the first three years of his administration more than his four predecessors had done to wipe out the Trust evil.

In that time he secured 45 indictments under the Sherman Law, whereas his predecessor, who vowed vengeance on all offenders, secured only 25 indictments in the entire seven years of his administration.

That's worth thinking over.

President Taft is not an enemy to business. He is the friend of legitimate industry.

What he did in the cases of the Tobacco Trust, the Steel Trust, the Sugar Trust, the Standard Oil Trust and other offending corporations, has already had its favorable effect upon independent companies.

Is Taft Boss-Ridden?

To anyone who has lived close to the administration in Washington, during the past three and a half years, the suggestion is ridiculous.

If there ever was a President who took his own counsel, who made his own decisions and carried them out in his own way, it has been William Howard Taft.

Time after time he has turned his back on political advisers, who told him that what he was doing was bad politics, and has gone the free independent way, and done the thing he felt was right.

If Mr. Taft had been willing to be ridden—if he had been weak enough to do what others told him to—if he had been willing to let Roosevelt be the power behind the throne—*there would not have been any third party in the field.*

Mr. Taft is *not* a politician. He is a statesman—a judge. Simple, quiet, sincere—

—*The kind of a man* to be our President.

* * *

These are the answers to the campaign questions. The truthful answers.

And *here* are some of the things the speakers and writers on the other sides do *not* touch on.

The country is more prosperous today than it has been for twenty years.

Factories and mines are running full force. Merchants have thrived, and there are no financial troubles.

The railroads report the heaviest freight and passenger traffic in their history.

The farmer has come into his own.

He neither wants nor needs to ship his produce to foreign ports.

Right at his door is the best market in all the world. The home market, able to consume and pay for all he can produce.

That means good times. The Taft administration—the Tariff policy—the *confidence* felt in Taft's wise, judicial methods have played a great big share in bringing this prosperity.

The outlook is for still better things.

A change at Washington right now would be the most disastrous blow that could strike the American Nation.

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE,
Charles D. Hilles, Chairman,
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WIFE'S HEALTH RESTORED

Husband Declared Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Would Restore Her Health, And It Did.

Ashland, Ky.—"Four years ago I seemed to have everything the matter with me. I had female and kidney trouble and was so bad off I could hardly rest day or night. I doctored with all the best doctors in town and took many kinds of medicine but nothing did any good until I tried your wonderful remedy, Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. My husband said it would restore my health and it has."—Mrs. MAY WYATT, Ashland, Ky.

There are probably hundreds of thousands of women in the United States who have been benefitted by this famous old remedy, which was produced from roots and herbs over thirty years ago by a woman to relieve woman's suffering.

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4 Full Quart Bottles Ullman's Whiskey $2.85

8 Full Quart Bottles Ullman's Whiskey $5.00

ONE BOTTLE DIXIE CHEER and Sample Old Athletic Club; with each 4 Quart Order for ULLMAN'S WHISKEY FREE

EXPRESS PREPAID

Express Prepaid

Now! Send remittance for $2.85 and we will ship you, express prepaid—four full quart bottles *Ullman's Reserve Stock Whiskey*, one bottle *Dixie Cheer*, and a sample bottle of *Athletic Club*; or remit us $5.00 and we will send you eight full quarts *Ullman's Reserve Stock Whiskey* with two free bottles *Dixie Cheer* and two bottles *Athletic Club*—express prepaid. Test the whiskey, by drinking all you please; if not delighted just return it to us and we will at once refund your money. All goods shipped in plain sealed packages. Do not fail to take advantage of this wonderful "just-in-order-to-prove" offer. *Order today!*

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ECZEMA CAN BE CURED TO STAY, and when I say cured, I mean just what I say—C-U-R-E-D, and not merely patched up for awhile, to return worse than before. Remember I make this broad statement after putting ten years of my time on this one disease and handling in the mean-time a quarter of a million cases of this dreadful disease. Now, I do not care what all you have used, nor how many doctors have told you that you could not be cured—all I ask is just a chance to show you that I know what I am talking about. If you will write me TO-DAY, I will send you a **FREE TRIAL** of my mild, soothing, guaranteed cure that will convince you more in a day than I or anyone else could in a month's time. If you are disgusted and discouraged, I dare you to give me a chance to prove my claims. By writing me to-day you will enjoy more real comfort than you had ever thought this world holds for you. Just try it and you will see I am telling you the truth.

Dr. J. E. Cannaday, 1796 Park Square, Sedalia, Mo.

References: Third National Bank, Sedalia, Mo.

Could you do a better act than to send this notice to some poor sufferer of Eczema?

WANTED ORGANIZERS. Good commissions, getting members. Social, fraternal. **ORDER OF OWLS, South Bend, Ind.** (mention this paper)

Boy Scout Adventures.

(Continued from page twenty.)

the recent chill snap was still in the air. And when Amos next opened his eyes the gray dawn was spreading along the eastern horizon. He raised his head and glanced toward his chum, smiling to see how the tired Dolph had gone sound to sleep at his post.

"His intentions were all right," laughed Amos; "but it was slow work trying to keep awake. Yet if I'd thought there was any danger, I'd have stood guard myself."

Looking toward the shore, he saw no signs of human kind. Birds had begun to fly from some nearby rookery, which was possibly protected by the Seminoles from the visits of the plume hunters; the sky had commenced to take on a beautiful pink flush that foretold the sun's coming; and with the early morning a breeze started to ruffle the surface of the water.

Arousing Dolph, who was considerably abashed when he found how he had slept on his post, Amos started operations for breakfast, saying:

"We have no need of going ashore again around here. Those men might be hiding back of the jungle there for all we know. So we'll have a little grub, and pull out. I think that air is going to invite us to use the sail again."

This suited his chum all right, for somehow he had taken a dislike toward that particular spot. Perhaps it was on account of the shock he had received on first landing, or the sensations that had come to him while waiting there for Amos to return.

The wind came out strong enough to send them along quite merrily after they had arranged the rude sail.

"Looks like a panorama unfolding, as we pass along close to the shore," remarked Dolph, who had been sitting and admiring each new view they opened up.

"And unless I'm mistaken there's the end of the ridge half a mile ahead," remarked his companion, pointing over the bow.

"Beyond that I reckon we'll plunge into the open sea of grass again?" said Dolph, rather disconsolately, for the prospect did not seem very alluring in his eyes, now that they were crippled by the collapse of their motive power.

"Nothing less, for there are many miles of that same ahead of us; and we're just bound to push through it before we can hope to get out of this place."

"Ugh! I'm sick of it, and never want to hear about the Everglades again; If I'd dreamed it meant such monotony, I'd never in the wide world have consented to come," declared the disconsolate Dolph.

"Oh! well, it's going to be an experience that we'll look back to," remarked the other.

"Yes, it is, for a fact. But anyhow, I'll be glad to leave this hogback ridge behind, with those three ruffians. I'm glad they didn't think to sneak out and capture the expedition while we slept. Say, what's that moving on the point ahead? Seems to me like a man, Amos?"

"It is a man. And unless I miss my guess, it's one of the crowd I ran up against last night," returned the other, instantly.

"What d'ye suppose he wants out there now?" questioned Dolph, as he reached a hand toward the spot where his gun reposed. Then seeing the twinkle in his chum's eye he desisted.

"Oh! I don't know," Amos remarked, "perhaps he's fishing, only I fail to see any sign of rod or line. Then he may have wandered down there to watch the sun come up. Perhaps he contemplates swimming across this puddle to another more friendly shore."

"Honest, now, Amos, what do you think?" pleaded the other. "I see he has seen us coming and wants to hail us. As we believe the fellows have no guns, and we are quite safe out here, let him talk. It doesn't cost anything, and may ease his mind some," was the reply Amos made.

It proved to be just as he said. The man waved his hand at them as they drew nearer.

"What do you want?" asked Amos, who was standing up near the crude mast, stiffening the hold of the canvas tarpaulin by sundry cords.

"Them guns—don't you think it's mighty hard for weuns to be left here without any way to get game?" asked the man, putting on an abject air.

"All right. Let Hank go to the Indian village and tell his woes to his brother-in-law. The guns are there," replied the boy, calmly.

"Air that a sure fact?" asked the other.

"We let the Indian carry them away with him, just as I said. But you men needn't starve so long as fish can be caught, or game trapped. I never expect to see you again, but I hope you've learned your lesson this time."

What the man said to them then would not look well in print. Dolph, as impulsive as ever, snatched his rifle up, and made as if to shoot; whereupon the fellow dropped out of sight in a hole. As long as they were within shooting distance only his head could be seen sticking up; and even this was hastily ducked every time the Carolina boy drew a bead. Finally they had sailed beyond hearing of his hoarse voice, and Dolph laid his gun down again.

"Of course that was all a bluff?" laughed his cousin.

"Sure. But it did the business, all right. He thought I might be tempted to take a pot-shot at him. What an ugly customer he was though," returned the other.

"Humph! you ought to have seen Hank, then; this fellow was apple pie beside him. But that winds the crowd up, so far as we're concerned."

"Three toughs like that, and you held 'em up alone!" saying which Dolph allowed his face to express the admiration he felt for his chum's boldness.

"Shucks! That wasn't much when you remember that not a blessed one of them had a gun. Forget it, boy, and let's talk of what lies ahead of us; for here we move out from behind the land, and start into the unknown."

"I reckon you hit it about right when you say that, old fellow. There's nothing else we can do but push on. And if this breeze only holds out the rest of the day, it's going to please me some, I tell you," pursued Dolph.

It proved fairly accommodating, although at no time was their pace very rapid. Still, the mere fact that they could advance without exercising their muscles was a consideration worth while. By the middle of the afternoon they found themselves once more seemingly adrift in the sea of tall grass. From time to time one of them would stand up, and try to get some knowledge of their surroundings.

"Nothing doing," reported Dolph, after he had taken his turn at this sort of amusement; "grass and water everywhere as far as a fellow can see; which ain't so great a ways after all. Gee! I'm tired of looking at this stuff. If anybody ever mentions the Everglades of Florida to me again I'll just shout!"

But, on the other hand, the observing Amos found considerable of interest to engage his attention as they drifted along. He was always on the alert for the little things around him. No bird moved but what his eye was focused on it; and as a general thing he could tell all about its habits. When they stirred up a nest or water moccasins, at which Dolph simply cut with the push-pole, his cousin told of many remarkable things he had read and heard about these strange snakes; and how they were dreaded next to the rattler in Florida by the native "crackers."

"People who are bitten by the moccasin don't die outright very often; but many times the wound simply refuses to heal, and the victim wastes away. I suppose it depends on the condition of the blood," he remarked, finally.

"No question about that," added the doctor's son; "but I never saw a fellow like you, Amos, among all my acquaintances. No matter what you run across in the way of animated nature, you want to know all about it; or else, having already found it out, you are willing to tell others."

"Thank you for the compliment, Chum Dolph. I suppose that is partly the fault of my inquiring nature, and the fact that when I joined the Boy Scouts I found learning things was the biggest part of the business. The deeper you dig into this game the more there seems to discover. I'm soaking it in all the time, and yet it seems to me that I have hardly made any impression at all on the mountain."

"Well, there's your breeze kicked the bucket at last," remarked Dolph.

"I don't see why you call it my breeze, when it was saving you just as much hard work as it did me. But you're right, it has dropped out of sight, and all around us the water begins to look like glass. I wonder what time it is?"

"Just about three. Do we begin the great pulling act again?" grunted Dolph.

"Oh! well, just as you say. It doesn't make a bit of difference where we hold up for the night out here. And every mile we go brings us that much nearer the end, you know, Dolph."

"That settles it for me. Anything to hasten that delightful hour when we will see the last of this disgusting spread. Ugh! it's going to haunt me everlastingly," with which the member of the Swamp Fox Patrol started to take down the clumsy sail, so that the oars could be used.

They plodded away for nearly an hour, when Dolph, of course, showed signs of lagging; for a steady grind always proved distasteful to him.

"What's that ahead of us?" he asked, finally, after twisting his head around several times.

"Well, it looks to me like a flock of ducks, though we've seen precious few since we started out on this cruise," replied his chum.

"Wouldn't it be a fine change of diet if we had a plump duck apiece?" suggested the other, in a wheedling tone.

"I guess so," laughed Amos, who knew the other was really only aiming to throw up the job of pulling the heavy and unwieldly boat. "Duck we may get, but plump ones never, in this country. You see, they don't get wild rice or wild celery down here for feed. Most of 'em eat small fish. That's why people who know take the whole skin off before they cook 'em. The taste lies in the oil just under the skin. Will you go, or shall I?"

"You're the better shot, so suppose you try. Two will be quite enough. And,

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These shawls are large and well-made, and we want every reader of this paper to have one of them, so we will send you one **FREE OF ALL CHARGE,** if you will enclose $1.00 for a year's subscription to this paper.

We send the shawl all charges prepaid. Be sure to state whether you want white or red in the proper space below.

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in the meantime. I'll get the boat ready for tying up tonight," remarked Dolph, who was really quite satisfied to lie there resting.

So it happened that Amos paddled off in the little canvas dinghy, with his double-barrel gun ready to his hand.

"Hey! remember now, no wandering off, and leaving me alone in this horrible place!" said his chum, as he waved a hand after the departing gunner.

"Well, I should say not. Think of poor me forced to spend a night in this flimsy little punkin-seed of a boat. If you hear me shout, give tongue. Remember our code of signals. But I expect to be back in about fifteen minutes, with a few birds."

Presently, Dolph, lying there amid the blankets, heard a shot. It was almost immediately followed by a second.

"Two," he remarked, complacently; and the chances are he dropped a brace; for when Amos pulls the trigger he generally gets something. Perhaps I'd better be moving, and get some water on to boil them in. Yes, there he comes around that tuft of grass, and he's holding up a bunch of feathers for me to see. Duck stew—well, that sounds all right to me for a change."

The continuation of this remarkable story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

No Use to Worry.

About a mile below Mississippi City we met a colored man on the highway who asked if we had seen a colored boy about six years old as we came along. Upon our replying in the negative, he scratched his head and looked puzzled and said:

"Dat Augustus was playin' 'round 'bout an hour ago, an whar he has dun disappeared to is mo' dan I kin tell. Reckon it's no use to worry."

"He walked beside us till he came to his cabin, which was situated on the edge of a bayou, and on the shore of the bayou lay four or five alligators basking in the sun.

"Don't alligators ever eat children?" queried the Colonel, after a look at the reptiles.

"Yes, sah, dey does."

"Then they might have eaten your Augustus."

"Yes, sah, so dey might. Hi dar, Linda!"

His wife came to the door in answer to his call, and he said:

"Linda, mebbe dem 'gators got Augustus."

"Mebbe dey has," she replied.

"Same as dey got Jupiter an' Moses an' Washington."

"Yes."

"Waal, I ain't gwine to hunt round no mo'. If Augustus went up de road, he'll git hungry an' cum back; if he went fishin' in de bayou an' de 'gators got him, den he gwine fur good, an' we hav only 'leben chilen left to git frew de summer on."

Fate of Wicked.

Mrs. Mary Martin is a virtuous, sober-minded, useful member of society. She delivers nice fresh vegetables and things to people in the city. Her market cart was new when Billy, the horse, was a giddy thing of 10 years. Mrs. Martin believes in the perseverance of the saints and the immediate overthrow of the wicked. She cites an instance:

"Driving down Milwaukee avenue, I was," says Mrs. Martin, "hoolding Billy well in, he was that mettlesome, the wayward fellow, his tail over the dashboard and his head in the air, the toires a-rattling—they are a troifle loose—when alongside comes a messenger lad on a bicycle. He smoiled agreeable and I smoiled in reply, and he hollers:

"'Look at your wheel!' he says.

"I pulled up me hoorse quick and strained me gaze to see what ailed me toires.

"'Ru-ubber!' says he.

"But just as he says it the bicycle runs into a waggin coomin' fast out of the alley, and the messenger lad, still looking back and smoiling so hearty, goes over head first into the street. And the bolcycle was a sight!

"No," says Mrs. Martin, "I would not imbarrass me fallen inimy. I just drove by, smoiling pleasant, and I just says, 'Look at yer wheel!' I says."

Napoleon and Business.

A business man said the other day:

"I'm taking down that picture of Napoleon over there; hate to do it, but can't be helped!"

"Why—it's a fine one, and the charm of your office in that line?"

"That's just the trouble," was the reply. "Did you notice that fellow going out just as you came in?"

"The tall man? Yes."

"Well, he had a business appointment with me this morning, but not a bit of business could I get out of him!"

"That's odd!"

"Not at all. His eye took in that Napoleon picture first thing, and he began with the French Revolution and hardly stopped for breath until after the battle of Waterloo! I tried to interrupt him and get down to business, but he wouldn't hear of it and he went away as mad as a March hare because he happened to recollect that the English Government sent his favorite hero to St. Helena!

"Yes," he concluded, "I'm taking that picture down and I'm going to send it home right away. It switches all of 'em off, and business ain't in it."

Waste of Money.

"When I played politics and little else," observed "Indian Jim" Finlay, "I was delegated to raise a subscription to buy a solid brass chandelier for a well-known politician who first saw the light of day in the Emerald Isle. It was to be a present to him to be installed in the parlor of a new house he was about to move into. Among those I tackled for a contribution was a man who had been born in the same town and came across the pond about the same time as the politician. I told him what was to be bought with the money, and as he put his name down for a fiver, he blurted out:

"I was born and brought up with Blank, and it is like throwing money in the river buying the likes of him a chandelier, as the divil of a note can he play on it."

Unkind Advantage.

Down in Oklahoma they have a baseball association called the Oklahoma State League. During on of their games at Tulsa recently an old man went to the park, paid his money, and took a seat on the bleachers. He sat with a look of disgust on his face while the pitcher, "fanned" the visitors in one, two, three order.

"How do you like the game, uncle?" asked a fan who sat next to him.

"It's all right, I reckon," said the old man, "but they ought to get another man to throw them balls. That there man can't throw a ball so's the other boys can hit it."

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